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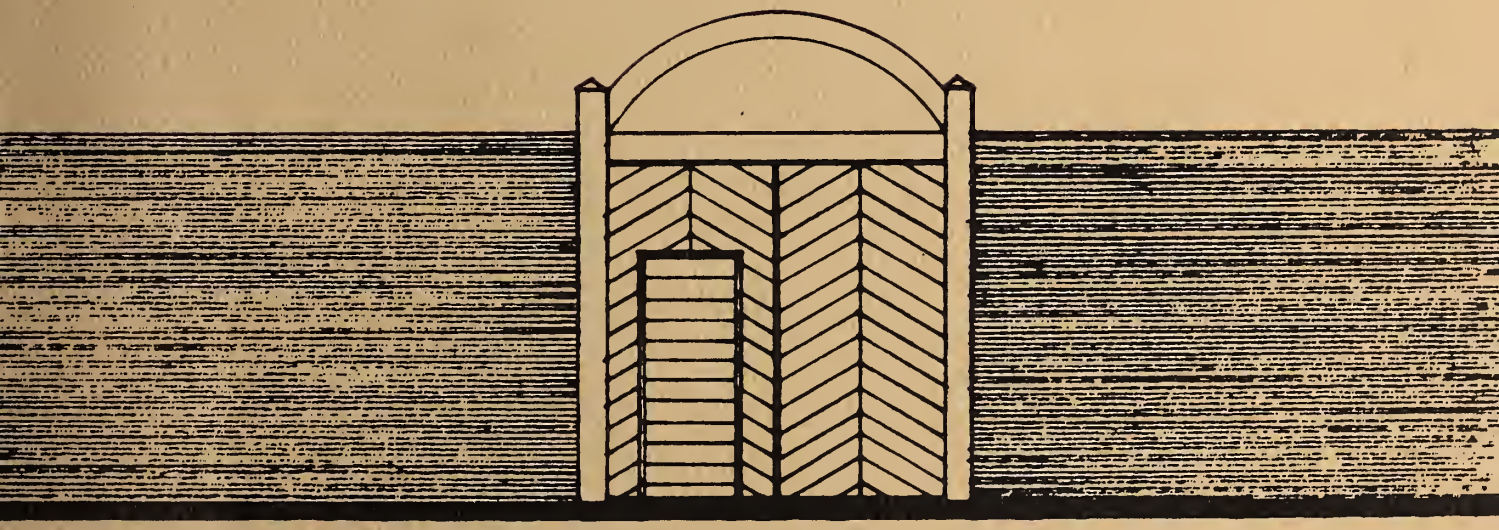

FORT OWEN

MASTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

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DEPARTMENT OF

FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

April 7, 1982

The following Master Plan outlines a comprehensive interpretive program for Fort Owen State Monument, the site of Montana's first permanent white settlement. This program includes the use of interpretive panels, markers, and displays in the existing buildings and at significant locations on the site.

Fort Owen's existing structures will be protected and preserved through improvement funding from the State of Montana. Complete reconstruction of Fort Owen will not occur because of potential damage to existing archaeological remains, costs, and the lack of complete information about the original fort. Mock-ups and construction details for Fort Owen's interpretive devices are bound in a separate volume.

This Master Interpretive Plan sets forth short- and long-range goals for Fort Owen State Monument that are flexible enough to accomodate future changes if they are needed. The completion of this plan marks a new beginning for the Fort Owen area. The Stevensville Historical Society deserves recognition for its past and future role in the preservation of Fort Owen. Special thanks should also go to consultants Michael Douglass and Kathleen Olson for their efforts in putting this document together.

Sincerely,

Ron Holliday

RON HOLLIDAY, Administrator
Parks Division.

MASTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

FORT OWEN STATE MONUMENT

Prepared for:
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Helena, Montana
by
Michael P. Douglass
Kathleen M. Olson

February 1, 1980

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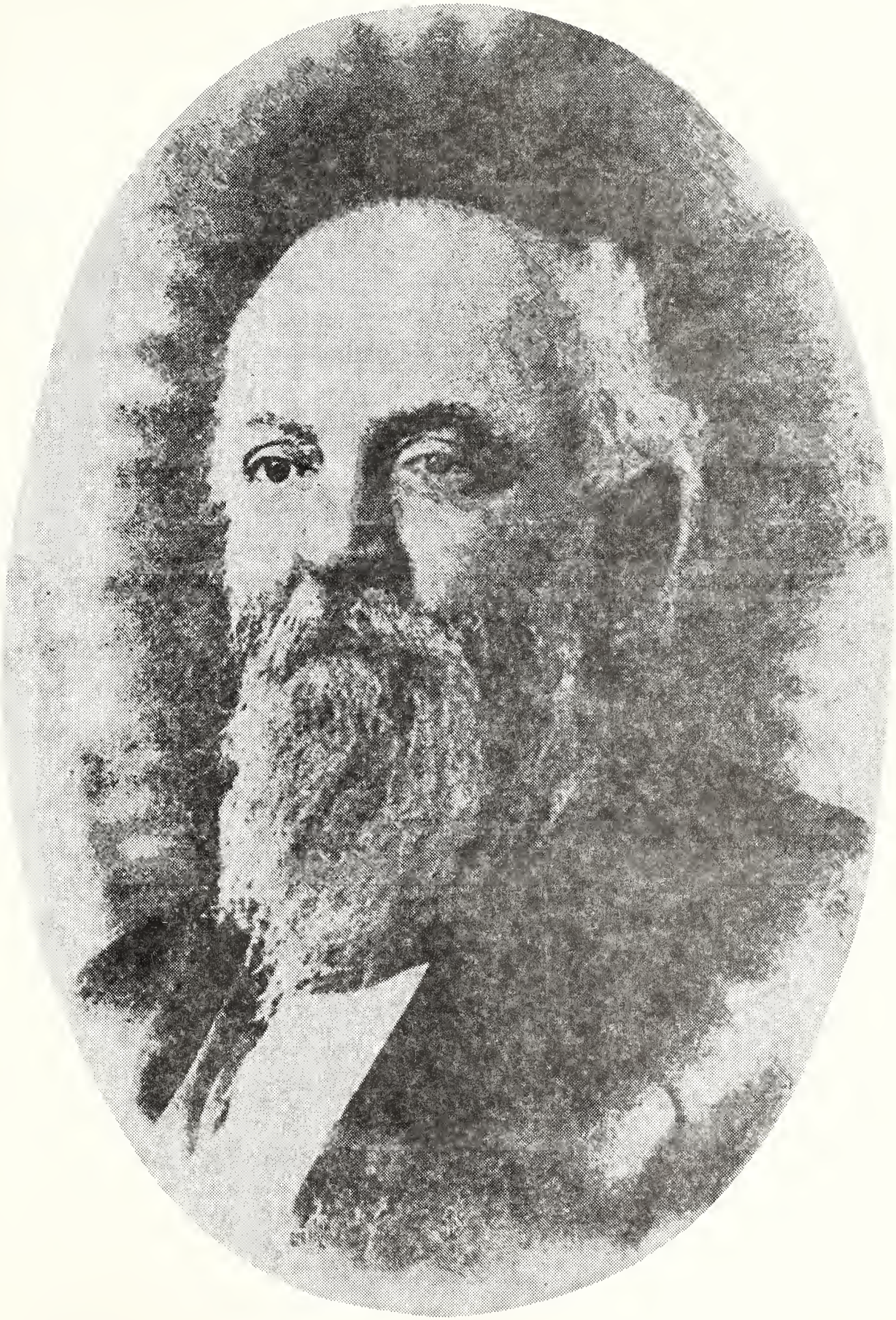

John Owen Fort Builder 1818 - 1889

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks with a Master Interpretive Plan for the present and future development of Fort Owen State Monument. The Master Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for preservation, use, development and interpretation of both historic and architectural themes apparent at the site. The plan is written to include future acquisition of 1.72 acres to the south of the existing compound.

In addition, this report includes, under separate cover, an implementation plan for presenting many of the interpretive themes addressed in the historical overview and interpretive recommendations. While this implementation plan is considered to be temporary, pending additional land acquisition and site development, it is hoped that facets of the plan can be retained permanently. The interpretive plan recommends use of a variety of interpretive devices including modular exhibits, interpretive markers, and a site guide brochure. Text scripts, technical information specifying construction details, illustrations, type size and style, colors, materials, and scale working drawings on mylar have been prepared.

Interpretive recommendations detailed in this plan are based on themes defined in a historical overview and an architectural analysis of construction, use, and alteration of existing and non-existing structures. Specific methods for effectively interpreting these themes and features consider a broad range of interpretive devices including tours (guided, self-guided, or audio), brochures, panels or markers, living history, partial or full restoration of various rooms or buildings,

special events and educational programming, and development and use of a visitor's center. Interpretive recommendations consider the condition and significance of each structure and feature as well as funding constraints.

HISTORY OF THE FORT OWEN PROJECT TO DATE

Fort Owen, in the Bitterroot Valley of Southwestern Montana, is the site of many "firsts" in the State of Montana. Located at the site of the first church in the state, the Fort was the first permanent settlement of anglos in Montana. The first sawmill, the first grist mill, the first irrigation system, the first agricultural development, and the first school also occurred on the Fort Owen site. In addition, business transacted at Fort Owen is recorded in Montana's earliest known account book kept by a free trader in the Rocky Mountain Northwest.

Fort Owen's history is intertwined with that of St. Mary's Mission, Montana's first Catholic Church. Fathers DeSmet, Point, and Mengarini, along with Brothers Specht, Claessens and Huet established the mission in October, 1841. The following year, they planted and harvested crops of potatoes, oats, and wheat. The fathers also inaugurated irrigation and built both a grist mill and a sawmill.

In the Autumn of 1850, the Jesuit Missionaries decided to abandon St. Mary's Mission and, on November 5, sold the church improvements to Major John Owen. Owen took over the property, renamed it "Fort Owen," and began active trade with the local Indians and fur trappers. Owen actively developed the site with extensive agricultural improvements, a new adobe brick fort compound, and a commercial grist mill. Owen remained as proprietor of Fort Owen until December 30, 1872, when the property was purchased by Washington J. McCormick. During McCormick's ownership, the fort structures deteriorated rapidly. Ironically, while attempting to save the roof of the west barracks, McCormick was killed as a gust of wind lifted both roof and man, depositing them in the courtyard.

After McCormick's death, the land was purchased by the May brothers who used it as a cattle ranch. Thereafter the property was leased in part to a Mr. Moore who lived with his family in the east barracks. The other buildings stood unoccupied and soon fell into further disrepair.

Since the 1920's, numerous individuals, groups, and service organizations have retained an active interest in Fort Owen. In 1927, Seymour Dunbar and University of Montana history professor, Paul C. Phillips edited and published the collected journals and letters of Major John Owen. The publication of Owen's writings well established the significance and place of the Fort in the history of Montana and the Northwest. The publication of the Owen journals also kindled public interest in preserving the Fort Owen site. In 1937, a group of citizens purchased an acre of land containing the remains of the Fort Owen compound in order to maintain it as a historic site. This group also sponsored stabilization and partial restoration of the badly deteriorated East Barracks.

In 1956, the Fort Owen site was accepted by the State of Montana and administered by the State Parks Division, Montana Highway Commission. (This agency has since evolved into the Montana State Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.) Under state administration, the Fort Owen site was designated as a State Monument. The Administrative Rules of Montana define the criteria and constraints inherent in this designation:

> 12.8.104 STATE MONUMENTS (1) Purpose. To preserve, protect, and enhance objects, features, or places of historical, geological, archaeological, or scientific importance, including commemoration of outstanding persons or events.
>
> (2) Description. Sites of optimum form and size for the protection and enhancement of the objects, features, or places concerned, including adequate space for parking, if appropriate, and other accomodations for anticipated day-use.
>
> (3) Development and management. Standard facilities will be access, parking, sanitation, and water. Other service facilities may be added if required. Overnight camping will ordinarily not be allowed. Development may also include

> restoration of historical structures, etc., and installation of protective devices. Maximum benefit to visitors may be achieved by providing museums, outdoor dioramas, and other interpretive exhibits. (History: Sec. 23-1-102; IMP, Sec. 23-1-102 MCA; Eff. 12/31/72.)

In 1957, archaeological investigation of Fort Owen was commenced by University of Montana students under direction of history and archaeology professors William Smurr and Carling Malouf. Archaeological survey work at Fort Owen continued, intermittantly, through 1980, and also involved University of Montana professors Dee C. Taylor and H. Duane Hampton. Hundereds of artifacts pertinent to life at Fort Owen have been recovered and are presently housed at the University of Montana, Missoula, Department of Anthropology.

The Historical American Buildings Survey of 1965 contracted with Montana State University School of Architecture professor John DeHaas to record historic structures in Montana. Measured drawings of Fort Owen were prepared during the project. These drawings, along with a historical overview, were published by Professor DeHaas in 1969.

In 1968, Fort Owen State Monument was included in the Montana State Inventory of historic properties and, on October 6, 1970, the site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Beginning with their publication, Montana Genesis, in 1971, the Stevensville Historical Society, a private non-profit corporation, has donated extensive time and money in their research, preservation, restoration, and interpretation of Fort Owen. In 1976, the Society received a grant from the Montana Bicentenniel Commission to hire a historic architect to prepare measured drawings of both existing and non-existing structures at Fort Owen. Architect James R. McDonald prepared these drawings based upon accumulated archaeological information and historical photographs. Funds from this grant were also used to reconstruct the Fort Owen wellhouse and privy.

The Stevensville Historical Society has also initiated other developments at Fort Owen. These include the installation of boardwalks along the East Barracks, continued stabilization of the East Barracks,

the excavation and construction of a shelter over the root house, and the relocation to the Fort grounds and restoration of the historic Wagner house.

In 1979, the Montana Legislature enacted legislation to officially set asside 5/6 of 1% of the State Coal Severance Tax Revenue to be placed in a trust fund with trust interest earnings dedicated for the support of cultural activities. During the 1981 Legislative session, proposals for the funding of specific cultural projects were heard, including historic site preservation and development. The Stevensville Historical Society received from the Coal Tax Fund, an appropriation of $20,000 for site development at Fort Owen. During the same session, The State Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks received an appropriation of $10,000 for capital improvments at Fort Owen from the Renewable Resource Development Grant Program.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Stevensville Historical Society coordinated plans for the development of the Fort Owen site and the use of their individual monies. Their plans specified the preparation of a Master Interpretive Plan for Fort Owen, and capital improvements including the installation of a well and pump, electrical service, and directional markers, restoration of the East Barrack chimneys and selected interior rooms, and the development of a variety of interpretive devices.

METHODOLOGY

The Fort Owen Master Interpretive Plan is developed upon the premise that effective historical interpretation is necessarily derived from solid foundation of historical research, architectural analysis or existing structures, archaeological and documentary evidence pertaining to non-existing structures, and creative application of a broad range of established interpretive techniques and devices.

History

The research of Fort Owen's historical themes and structures

employed a variety of sources. The most important contemporary information regarding daily life at Fort Owen is the collected journals and letters of Fort proprietor, John Owen. The transcribed and published versions of these documents were thoroughly investigated as well as were the original journals of John Owen, perserved in the manuscript collections of the Montana Historical Society. The business ledger of Fort Owen was of similar importance. Both the published version of this record, as well as the historical document (also in the collections of the Montana Historical Society) were used. Primary source materials also included contemporary sketches and photographs of the Fort Owen compound and grist mill. Information regarding the original configuration of the Fort Owen walls, bastions, and barracks was further gleaned from the extensive body of archaeological evidence of nearly twenty-five years of work by the University of Montana Departments of history and anthropology.

Of secondary importance to the historical investigation of Fort Owen was the numerous books and articles written about the Fort, its proprietor, and the many historically significant persons who worked, lived, and traded there. This includes documents related to the Jesuit occupation of the site; journals and reminisces of Fort employees, and materials pertaining to the general settlement of the American West, circa 1845 - 1890.

Architecture

The architectural analysis included in the Fort Owen Master Interpretive Plan consists of two parts: 1) An architectural history based on published materials pertaining to the Jesuit occupation and development of the site and the Fort Owen journal accounts recorded by Major Owen and his contemporaries. 2) A documentation of existing and non-existing structures prepared by the firm of historic architect, James R. McDonald, Missoula. Mr. McDonald prepared technical drawings

detailing the historical elevations and plans of Fort Owen structures based on historical archaeology and historical photographs, and recorded contemporary measurements and photographs of the existing Fort structures. From this information, a site description and an analysis of structural fabric and condition was developed.

Interpretation

The interpretive section of this report develops: 1) guidelines for interpretive planning based on established tennets and procedures for developing documentary sites; 2) objectives for interpretive development reflecting specific historical themes, condition of existing site structures and features, and implementation of interpretive devices; 3) recommended interpretive themes and appropriate interpretive devices; 4) recommendations for programmatic development to augment the stationary interpretive devices; 5) a discussion of the administrative structure requisite to implement the interpretive recommendations; 6) options for future development at Fort Owen State Monument. While the plan assumes the future acquisition of additional land at Fort Owen, an interim plan for the interpretive development of the present state holdings is presented. Also included is a discussion of historical artifact acquisition, cataloging, and maintenance.

Constraints

Because of the important role Fort Owen played historically, the great transitions in the settlement of the West it witnessed, and the panorama of historically significant personalities associated with it, Fort Owen State Monument is ideally suited for an extensive interpretive program. However, Fort Owen also presents specific problems for research, preservation, and interpretation. Although documentation of life at Fort Owen through the Fort Owen Journals, ledger, and John Owen letters is unusually rich, this material has limitations. Owen thoroughly

documented special events such as Christmas, New Years, and Independence Day celebrations, but paid little attention to daily work routines and divisions of labor within the Fort Owen staff. He refers to many activities that appear to be pertinent to the business profile of the Fort, but never details the administrative structure of personalities involved in the Fort Owen farm, trade room, sawmill, grist mill, Agency, etc. If day books or financial journals were maintained at the Fort, their present location or existence is unknown.

Corresponding to the limited information detailing life at Fort Owen, is that pertaining to John Owen, himself. Little is known of his life prior to his arrival in the Bitterroot Valley. Virtually no details have been discovered concerning his military career, or the particulars regarding his sutlership with Loring's expedition of mounted riflemen. Similarly, information about Owen's life during his last twelve years in Pennsylvania is presently unknown.

The total deterioration and absence of detailed documentation of the majority of Fort Owen structures presents a major constraint in accurately interpreting their appearance and use. It is also difficult to present the spatial volume and mass originally conveyed by these now absent structures. References to work on the Fort during the two main construction phases (1852 and 1857 - 1860) abound, yet no detailed sketch or description of individual room use or location exists. As a result, questions remain unanswered as to the location of the school room, blacksmith shop, carpentry shop, and other rooms. The journals also suggest that a small village of log structures grew up around the Fort, yet the exact number, size, location, or occupants of these houses are never specified.

The major constraint imposed upon the interpretive plan is that of the minimal acreage of the State Monument. Extensive use of historical markers, modular exhibits, and other spatially-compact

interpretive devices is therefore necessary. The relative paucity of documented historical artifacts that can be exhibited at Fort Owen also necessitates a heavy reliance on two-dimensional materials such as photographs, drawings, or modern reproductions of historical objects in the interpretive presentation. This constraint is further exacerbated by the incomplete and largely uninterpreted archaeological record.

In summary, the documentary and land constraints have determined that the primary interpretive emphasis will be placed on the Fort Owen compound and the character of Major John Owen during the years 1850 - 1873. However, other themes contemporary to John Owen's years at the Fort are also addressed. The report presents a balanced plan for creating an interpretive foundation for present needs and future development of Fort Owen State Monument.

Chapter Two

HISTORIC THEMES OF FORT OWEN

CHAPTER 2

HISTORIC THEMES OF FORT OWEN

A FORT OWEN CHRONOLOGY

1818 June, 27 John Owen is born in Pennsylvania.

1841 September, 24 Jesuit Missionaries arrive in the Bitterroot Valley. Work soon commences on first St. Mary's Church.

1846 Great Britian cedes all lands below 49th parallel, comprising "the Oregon Country" and including portions of Western Montana, to the United States.

1846 (circa) Jesuits build second St. Mary's Church "on the prairie" some distance from first church on the river bank. Church buildings are surrounded by log pallisades.

1849 Summer - John Owen journeys West on the Oregon Trail as Sutler to "Mounted Riflemen" military expedition.

1849 Winter - John Owen camps and trades at Fort Hall and Cantonment Loring on the Snake River. (near present Pocatello, Idaho.) Owen meets Shoshoni woman, Nancy.

1850 Spring - John Owen leaves military expedition, begins independent trade with emigrants on the Oregon Trail.

1850 November 5, Jesuits decide to abandon Bitterroot Mission and "conditionally" sell improvements to John Owen. Owen takes over St. Mary's Mission and renames it "Fort Owen."

1852 January, 1 "Conditional" ownership status ends, John Owen becomes full owner of fort buildings and land.

1852 April - May First grist mill at Fort Owen is constructed and operated.

1852 April to November New adobe structures are built inside the Fort Owen compound.

1852 September, 15 John F. Dodson, A Fort Owen employee, is killed by Blackfeet while hauling hay within site of the Fort.

1853 Summer - John Owen and Fort employees abandon Bitterroot Valley because of Blackfeet harassment and low trade. They meet government supply train near present Spokane and return to Fort Owen under military protection.

1853 September - Washington Territory Governor Isaac Stevens arrives at Fort Owen with party to survey northern route for railroad.

1853 Autumn - Lt. John Mullan establishes Cantonment Stevens twelve miles south of Fort Owen to serve as base for meteorological survey during winter, 1853 - 1854.

1855 July - Governor Isaac Stevens negotiates treaty and land cession with Flathead Indians. Agency headquarters established on Jocko River.

1856 Spring - John Owen becomes Special Agent for the Flathead Nation, re-establihses agency headquarters at Fort Owen.

1857 January to May - David Pattee builds second Fort Owen grist mill.

1857 April - Adobe remodeling and reconstruction of Fort Owen begins.

1857 May to August - David Pattee builds overshot sawmill at Fort Owen to cut lumber for Fort construction.

1858 January, 8 - John Owen, Caleb Irvine, and Thomas Harris sign marriage contracts with their Indian wives at Fort Owen.

1859 - 1860 Winter - Lt. John Mullan returns to Western Montana to build Military Road. Establishes Cantonment Jordon 110 miles west of Fort Owen.

1860 Autumn - Construction completed on adobe walls, barracks, and bastions at Fort Owen.

1860 December, 20 - Southern States pass "Ordinance of Secession."

1861 School started at Fort Owen for the Indian and half-breed children living at or near the Fort.

1861 April, 12 - Confederate troops attack Fort Sumter.

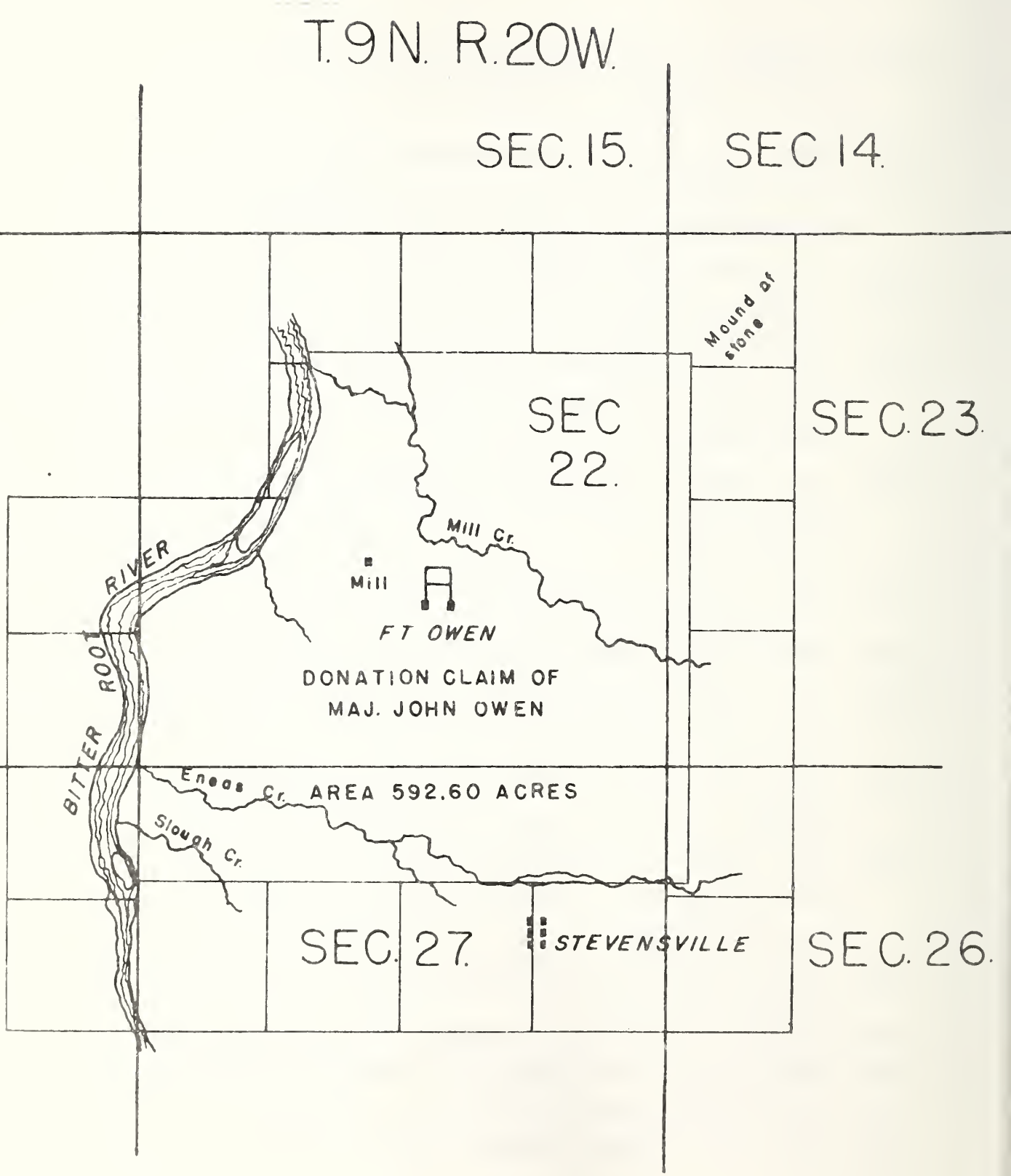


Figure 2.1: Donation claim of Major John Owen, 1875.
Source: George Weisel, Men and Fur Trade in the Northwest, 1955.

1862 July - John Owen resigns as Flathead Agent in disgust at government insensitivity and waste.

1862 July - Gold discovered on Grasshopper Creek, Bannack.

1863 June, 2 - Construction begins on third Fort Owen grist mill.

1864 May, 26 - President Lincoln signs bill creating Montana Territory; Bannack designated Territorial Capitol.

1865 April, 9 - Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders Appomattox Court House.

1865 September, 15 - Three-story commercial grist mill completed at Fort Owen.

1866 February - John Owen terminates relations with long-time friend, employee, and assigned heir, Thomas Harris.

1866 March - Owen elected delegate to Constitutional Convention, in Helena. Does not attend.

1866 September - Owen elected to Territorial Legislature, to convene in Virginia City. Does not attend.

1866 October, 28 - New St. Mary's Mission Chapel in Stevensville dedicated with Mass celebrated by Father Giorda.

1868 September, 24 - Owen's Shoshoni wife, Nancy, dies.

1871 John Owen begins to suffer mental breakdown and severe financial reverses.

1872 Owen taken to Helena, placed in care of Sisters at St. John's Hospital.

1872 December, 30 - Fort Owen sold at Sheriff's auction to pay Owen's debts. Washington J. McCormick buys property.

1877 John Owen is deported from Territory. He is delivered to his family in Philadelphia by long-time friend, W.E. Bass.

1889 February, 3 - W.J. McCormick is killed at Fort Owen during wind storm.

1889 July, 12 - John Owen dies in Pennsylvania.

1889 November, 8 - President Benjamin Harrison proclaims Statehood for Montana.

1927 The Journals and Letters of John Owen are published through the financial support of W.R. Coe.

1937 An acre of land containing the ruins of Fort Owen is purchased to be maintained as a historic site.

1956 The Fort Owen site is donated to the State of Montana and is designated as a State Monument.

1957 Archaeological investigations at Fort Owen are begun by professors and students from the University of Montana.

1965 Measured drawings of the Fort Owen East Barracks are prepared by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

1970 Fort Owen is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1976 Stevensville Historical Society funds preparation of measured drawings of all historic structures (existent and non-existent) at Fort Owen.

1981 Stevensville Historical Society receives monies from the Montana State Coal Severance Tax Revenue for development at Fort Owen.

1981 Historical and Museum consultants are retained to aid the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in long-range interpretive planning at Fort Owen.

REGIONAL HISTORY

Local Geography

The Bitterroot Valley lies on the east side of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains in the westernmost part of Montana. The entire Valley stretches nearly one hundred miles from North to South, and is fifteen miles wide at the greatest width. On the west side of the Valley is the majestic Bitterroot Range of mountains, with jagged peaks rising between eight and ten thousand feet. On the east side of the Valley is the Sapphire Range, lower, more rounded peaks averaging some 6,500 feet.

The Valley is drained by the Bitterroot River which flows north, and slightly east,joining the Clark's Fork of the Columbia River just west of present Missoula. The Valley floor is relatively flat; though it descends northward, it has an everage elevation of 3,000 feet.

Because of the protective ring of mountains, the Valley enjoys a relatively mild climate for its latitude. Springs are usually long, wet, and cool followed by short, hot, and dry summers. Autumns tend to be long and mild, frequently with an early killing frost followed by a long Indian Summer. Winters are variable, but tend to alternate open spells with cold periods. In January, average temperatures are in the low 20's. With an everage yearly rainfall of less than 13 inches, much of which falls as snow, the climate is semi-arid.

Historically, the Bitterroot Valley was home to a wide range of game including bison, grizzly bears, black bears, elk, moose, mule deer, whitetail deer, mountain goat, muskrat, and beaver.

Politically, the Bitterroot Valley has been part of an Indian domain, disputed International lands, four U.S. Territories, and one state. Since c. 1700, the Valley was home to the Salish people. During the early 19th Century it was considered part of the vast region known as Oregon country. In 1846, the Oregon Treaty between Great Britian and the United States ceded the lands to America. The Valley became part of Oregon Territory in 1848, Washington Territory in 1853, Idaho Territory in 1863, and Montana Territory in 1864. In 1889, the Bitterroot Valley was included within the political boundaries of the State of Montana.

The Flathead Indians

The Salish Indians, commonly known as Flatheads, were one of several continually migrating tribes who inhabited the Columbian Plateau. They were a nomadic river people who followed the tributaries of the Columbia River, subsisting on fish, native roots, and game. At the time of their first contact with white fur traders, the Flathead

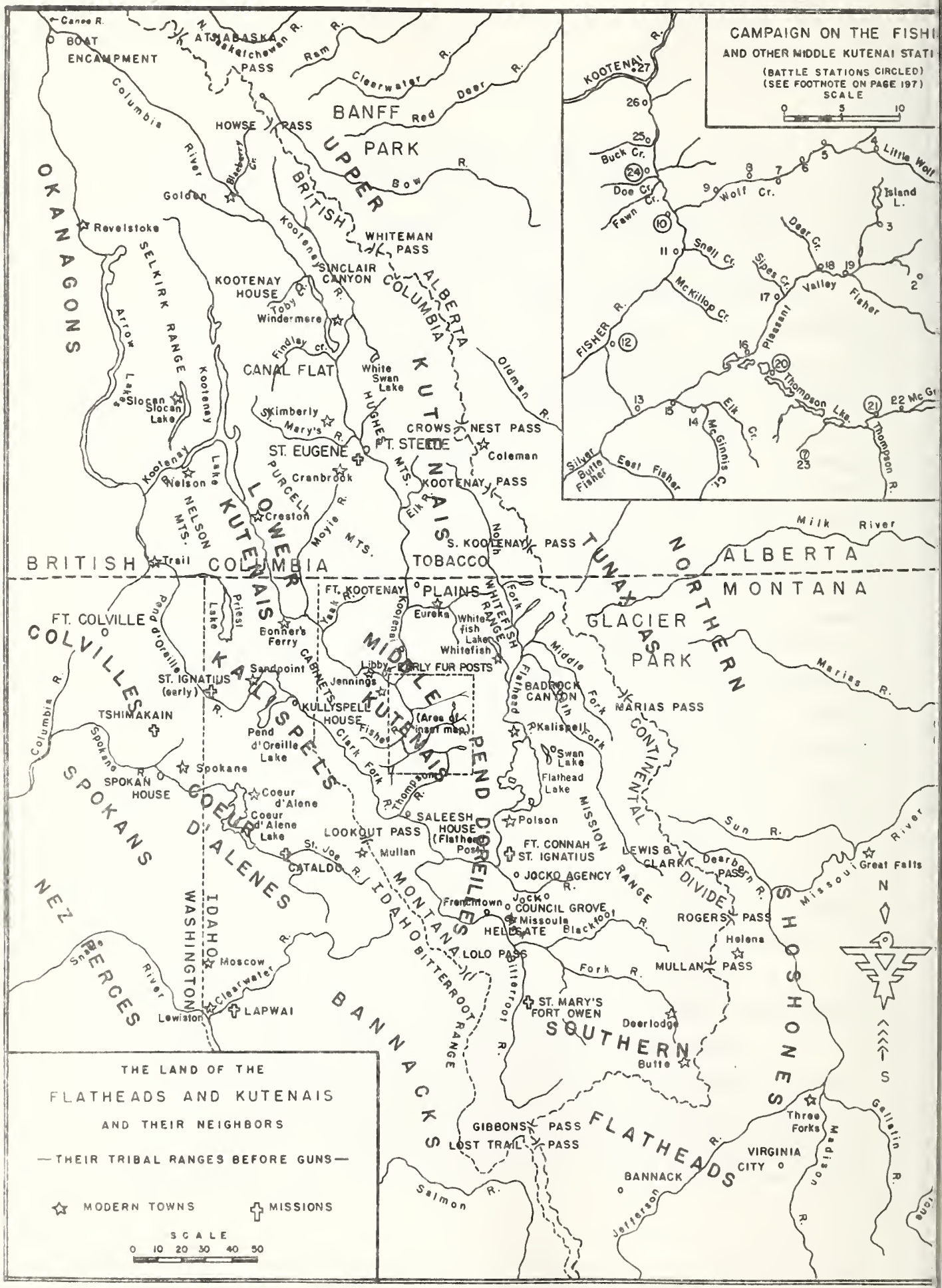


Figure 2.2: Map showing territory occupied by Flathead and Kootenai, ca. 1800
Source: D. W. Johnson, Flathead and Kootenai Indians, 1965

were well established in the Bitterroot Valley with a main encampment near present Stevensville. They made semi-annual hunting forays to the bison-covered plains east of the Rocky Mountains and lesser journeys throughout western Montana, northern Idaho, and eastern Washington.

When John Owen arrived in Montana in 1850, the Flatheads numbered approximately 450 persons. They were widely regarded by early trappers, traders, and explorers as a peace-loving people possessing qualities of generosity, unquestioning loyality, and bravery. Beginning with the Jesuits, who founded a mission among the Flathead in 1841, relations between the Flatheads and whites were always very good.

The Explorations of Lewis and Clark

By the turn of the 19th century, the visions of both British Canada and the United States were focused upon the far Northwest. The British were prospering from their knowledge of the economic potential of the region while the United States had yet to realize the economic and political significance this largely unexplored country held for their own growth. To determine the nature and extent of this uncertain wealth, President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 requested an appropriation of $2,500 to fund an overland expedition to ascend the Missouri River to its source and explore the country between the Missouri headwaters and the Pacific Ocean. Jefferson optimistically hoped that the expedition would reveal the long sought Northwest Passage, but also stated a more practical purpose, suggesting the journey be made "to extend the external commerce of the United States." In other words, to explore the economic potential of the fur trade.[1]

Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark commanded the expedition which included 26 Army regulars, Clark's Black slave, York, two French rivermen, and the French interpreter, George Drouillard. From their departure in September, 1804, until their return on September 23, 1806, the party explored the Missouri and Columbia River Basins recording geographic and scientific observations. Using accepted tech-

niques of negotiation, the explorers prepared the Indians for the expected onslaught of American traders.[2]

Lewis and Clark discovered that the Northwest passage did not exist, but did establish that the American west supported an immense wealth in beaver and other valuable furs. The exploitation of the vast resource began at once. Within one year after the return of Lewis and Clark, St. Louis financiers were backing veteran trapper Manuel Lisa and his plan to explore and trap in the Three Forks region and valley of the Yellowstone, an area highly recommended by the American explorers.

The fur trade of the upper Missouri and the Rocky Mountain west was continuous, increasing steadily until the late 1830's when a change in fashion caused beaver prices to plummet. The "mountain men" who traversed the fur rich country completed the exploration of the West that Lewis and Clark had begun.

This entire wilderness expanse, more than twice the size of the United States at the beginning of Jefferson's administration, supported the international fur market for over 30 years and inspired economic and settlement policy known as Manifest Destiny.

The Oregon Trail

The Oregon Trail, known also as the Platte Trail, Emigrant Road, or Road to Oregon served from 1843 to 1869 as a vital overland link between Independence, Missouri and the mouth of the Walla Walla River in Washington.[3] The Trail began simply as a series of unconnected paths trod by herds of bison, deer, and antelope during seasonal migrations in search of water and forage. By the early 19th century, various fur trappers and trading companies began to tie together these many trails as they traversed the western drainages in search of fur-bearing animals.[4]

The 1830's saw increased interest in western migration and settlement, resulting in travel to Oregon both by land and water. The economic panic of 1837 further stimulated westward movement.[5] By 1842,

migration via the Oregon Trail had begun in earnest; in 1843, close to one thousand men, women, and children journeyed the Trail with a nearly equal number of both cattle and oxen.[6]

The United States Congress in 1846 recognized the need for military protection along the Oregon Trail by authorizing funds to equip a regiment of mounted riflemen to traverse the Trail and establish a series of posts.[7] Interrupted by the Mexican War, which also broke out in 1846, the march to Oregon did not get under way until the Spring of 1849.[8]

In 1851, Jesuit Father Pierre Jean DeSmet recorded the following remarks concerning travel on the Trail:

> The 2nd of September, 1851, we found ourselves on the Great Route to Oregon, over which, like successive ocean surges, the caravans, composed of thousands of emigrants from every country and clime, have passed during these latter years to reach the rich gold mines in California, or to take possession of the new lands in the fertile plans and valleys of Utah and Oregon...Our Indian companions ...were filled with admiration on seeing this noble highway, which is as smooth as a barn floor swept by the winds, and not a blade of grass can shoot on it on account of the continual passing... 9

Through the 1850's, travel on the Oregon Trail continued steadily. To provide necessary supplies for the western emigrants and settlers, great trains of oxen-drawn freight wagons transported goods from the east, via the Trail. A freighting company in 1858 reported that it had transported 16,000,000 pounds of freight in 3,500 - 4,000 wagons specially built in St. Louis to carry 5,000 - 7,000 pounds each. The enterprise employed four to five thousand men, forty thousand oxen, and one thousand mules.[10]

The rise in emigrant travel along the Oregon Trail coincided with the decline of the western fur trade. Some trading posts, originally established to trade furs, shifted to active commerce with the western immigrants. Basic food supplies such as flour, sugar, bread, and

meat, as well as leather, alcohol, and, when available fresh vegetables. were sold at greatly inflated prices.[11]

Livestock trade also became important. Footsore and trail weary beasts were traded for fresher, healthier animals, sometimes in a ratio of two to one. The tired stock would then be driven to a sheltered valley for rest and nourishment, to be traded to new emigrants the following spring.[12] The Beaverhead, Bitterroot, and Hell Gate Valleys in Western Montana were used for such purposes. John Owen, as well as a number of the regular customers at his Fort, profitted from this lucrative trade.[13]

Survey work for a transcontinental railraod began in 1853; by 1863, a route had been designated that paralleled substantial portions of the Oregon Trail and the laying of the tracks was undertaken. The historic union of the eastern and western sections of the glistening steel rails occurred on May 10, 1869, an event that marked the beginning of the end of travel on the Oregon Trail.

The Jesuits in the Bitterroot Valley: St. Mary's Mission

The European discovery and exploration of the vast North American continent offered both challenges and incentives to the Society of Jesus whose chief purposes were to stem the swelling tide of Protestantism and to spread the Catholic faith to every quarter of the globe. Undeterred by previous setbacks in Europe, the Jesuits extended their Missionary work to the Eastern and Central portions of the United States "where thousands of Catholics were forgetting God and abandoning their religion."

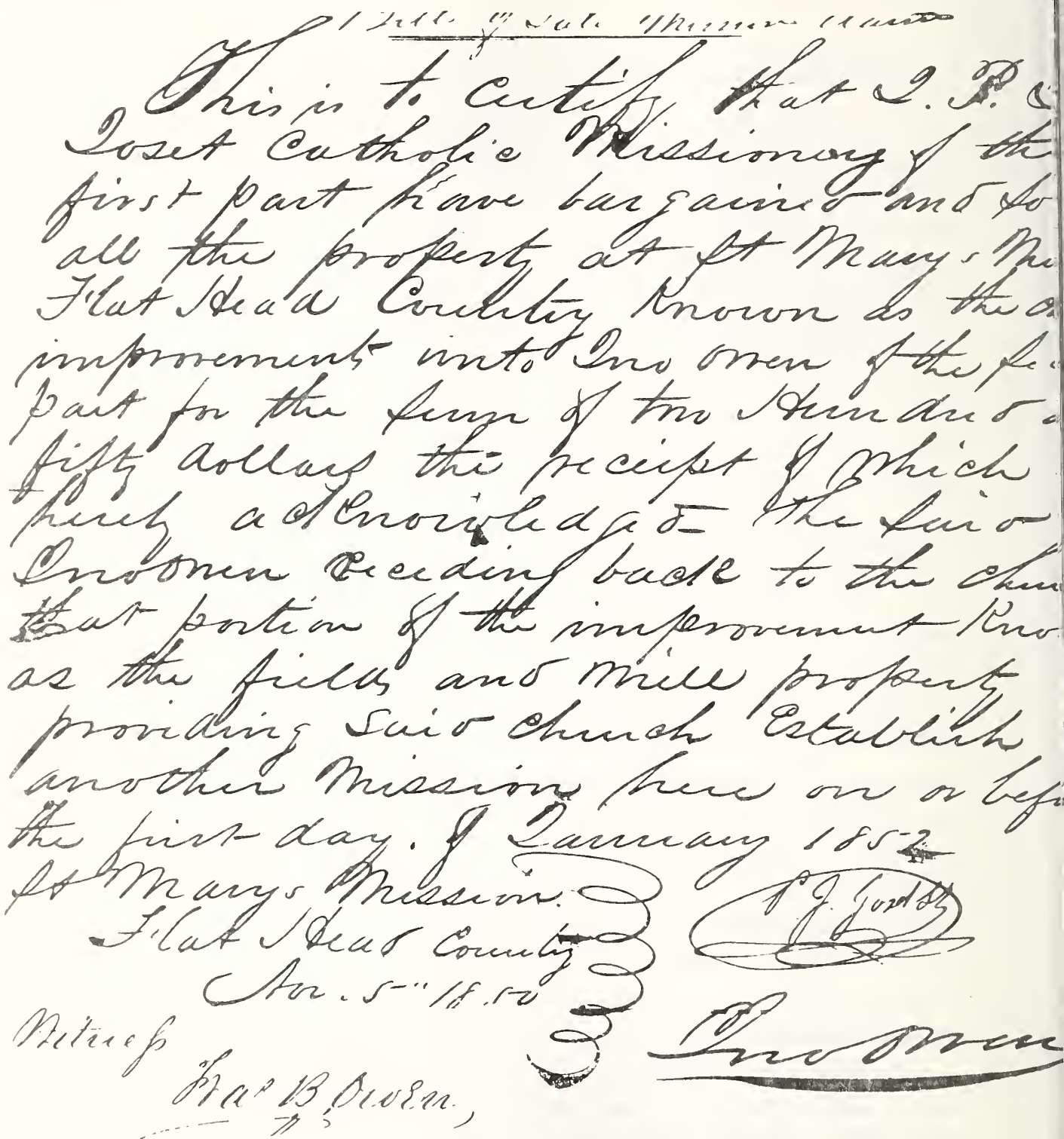
By 1840, the population of the United States exceeded 17 million. Each year, pioneers pushed farther westward, cutting a path through forests and across prairie lands. With a domino-like effect of displacement, migration, and relocation, the Native American peoples were forced from their Eastern homelands to those further west.

After learning of Christianity from trappers, traders, and eastern

Indians who had come west with the fur trade, the Flatheads fervently desired to learn more of the Catholic faith for themselves. Four delegations journeyed to St. Louis, in 1831, 1835, 1837, and 1839 in search of the legendary "Black Robes."[14] Finally, in 1840, Father Pierre Jean DeSmet responded to their plea, journeying to the Rocky Mountains to examine the possibility of Jesuit expansion throughout the Northwest. Upon returning to St. Louis in the Fall of 1840, DeSmet successfully solicited money with which to construct a Mission among the Flatheads. In 1841, DeSmet, along with Fathers Point and Mengarini, as well as three Jesuit Brothers, established St. Mary's Mission in the Bitterroot Valley.[15] The Mission's early years were both encouraging and productive, with active building and agriculture programs initiated by the Jesuits. In October 1841, DeSmet traveled from St. Mary's to Fort Colville to obtain much needed seed for potatoes, wheat, and oats. The first crops were planted the following spring and to the amazement of the Indians, harvested in the fall. In successive years, with the aid of Fathers Mengarini and Ravalli, fields were enlarged and the Flathead were taught the fundamentals of farming. Using two burr stones presented to Father Ravalli by a Belgian merchant, a Canadian named Biledout was hired in 1844 "to build and put into working order two mills at the Mission, a flour mill and a saw mill."[16] By 1846, the priests residing at St. Mary's were grinding flour. The mills were operated by the Jesuits until their ownership was assumed by John Owen in 1850.

In addition to their crops, the Jesuits introduced the first herds of cattle, hogs, and other domestic animals to the valleys of Western Montana. These, too, arrived from Fort Colville.[17]

As hoped, the initial years at St. Mary's witnessed enthusiastic participation by the Flatheads, their neighbors, and allies. By the late 1840's, however, the three-fold problem of lack of funds necessary to run the mission, apostasy among the Flathead converts, and continual harassment from the Blackfeet Indians forced the Fathers to close St. Mary's.



Bill of Sale Thomas Owen

This is to certify that I. J. C
Jesuit Catholic Missionary of the
first part have bargained and so
all the property at St Marys Mi
Flat Head Country known as the a
improvements into Jno Owen of the se
part for the sum of two Hundred a
fifty dollars the receipt of which
hereby acknowledged the said
Owen Deeding back to the chu
that portion of the improvement kno
as the fields and Mill property
providing said church Establish
another Mission here on or bef
the first day of January 1855
St Marys Mission
Flat Head Country
Nov. 5th 1854

P. J. Gordon

Jno Owen

Witness
Wm B. Owen

Figure 2.3: Bill of Sale between Major John Owen and Father Joseph Giorda, S.J.

Source: Montana Historical Society, John Owen Papers

John Owen was apparently camped within the Bitterroot area when Father Joseph Giorda decided to sell the mission. No record exists of activity preceeding the transaciton. The Bill of Sale was signed by both Joset and Owen and dated November 5, 1850.

MAJOR JOHN OWEN

Early History

Major John Owen officially entered the documentary history of Montana on November 5, 1850.[18] On that day, Owen affixed his signature to a bill of sale finalizing the purchase of "all property of St. Mary's Mission Flathead Country known as the Church improvements."[19] The parcel of land along the Bitterroot River where Father Pierre Jean DeSmet had nine years earlier planted a cross and where Jesuit missionaries had struggled to convert "heathen souls" and raise Montana's first crop of wheat, thus became Fort Owen.[20]

Prior to this date, Owen's activities and history are largely speculative. According to testimony in his journals, Owen was born June 27, 1818.[21] The place of residence and occupation of Owen's parents is unknown as well as any detail concerning his early life or education. That Owen was well-educated and an intelligent man is thorougly evidenced in his extant letters, journals, remnants of his library, and contemporary accounts.[22]

In May, 1846, the United States Congress authorized an expedition of Mounted Riflement of ten companies of 64 privates each to march the length of the Oregon Trail and establish a string of military posts. The regiment was recruited in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Mississippi, and was assembled at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. Tradition suggests that Owen, as well as his long-time friend, Caleb Irvine, were members of the regiment.[23]

The outbreak of the Mexican War, also in 1846, altered plans for the march to Oregon, and the Mounted Riflemen were dispatched to the seat of the war in Mexico. After distinguished service there, the regiment returned to Jefferson Barracks in July, 1848.[24] The troops were mustered out of service in August and reorganization of the regiment and preparation for the march to Oregon began. By March, 1849, commanding officer Brevet-Colonel Loring had assembled his train at Fort Leavenworth. Consisting of five companies of soldiers, seven hundred horses, twelve hundred mules, and one hundred seventy-one wagons, the mounted regiment began their westward march on May 10.[25]

John Owen was attached to the regiment as a sutler.[26] Whether he occupied the position alone or with one or more others is not known. In either case, it was a lucrative position, ideally suited for trade with both soldiers and emigrants. On military campaigns, the sutler followed the regimental headquarters and served as a combination huckster-traveling store, selling everything from chewing tobacco to herring. For this privledge, the sutler was charged a fee.[27]

By June, the regiment had progressed as far west as Fort Laramie, an American Fur Company trading post constructed near the confluence of the Laramie and Platte Rivers.[28] On June 26, the post was acquired by the U.S. Government and served as a military post until 1890.[29]

By August, the riflemen had reached Fort Hall, a Hudson's Bay Company post on the Snake River near present Pocatello, Idaho. Two companies of the reigment were assigned to establish a camp some three to five miles below Fort Hall. Under command of Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel Porter, the encampment was dubbed Cantonment Loring.[30] Either attracted by the trade possibilities at Cantonment Loring and Fort Hall or assigned to the encamped troops in some quasi-offical manner, Major Owen spent the winter of 1849-1850 here on the Snake River.[31]

It was an important winter for Owen in several respects. During the winter of 1849-1850, presumedly at or near Fort Hall, Owen met

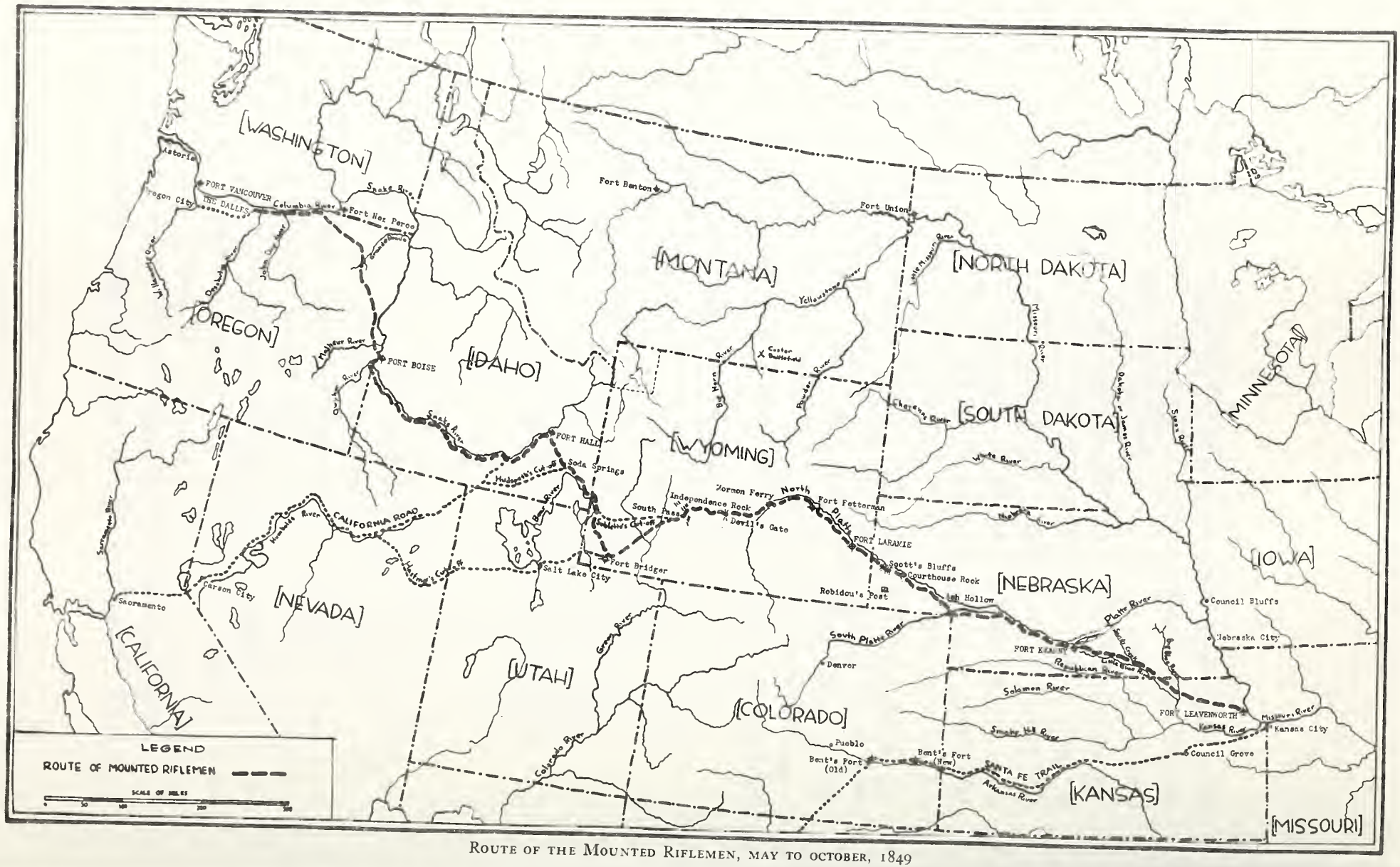
Nancy, a Shoshoni woman who became his companion and mate and whom he married at Fort Owen in 1858.[32] Nancy was a small woman who stood barely five feet tall and was, apparently, some years older than Owen. She accompanied him on a number of his expeditions throughout the Northwest and is frequently mentioned in Owen's jounrals.[33]

Owen also met Captain Richard Grant during the winter at Fort Hall. Grant was the Hudson's Bay Company chief trader at the Fort from 1841 to 1852, when he took up trading on the Oregon Trail. Grant later had contact with Owen when he moved to western Montana. Grant lived in the Jocko and Bitterroot Valleys and eventually settled on Grant Creek, west of Missoula.[34] Grant was well known as a gracious host and gentleman. In this respect, he may have served as a role model for Owen.

Lieutenant John Mullan visited Grant in 1853, after Grant had left his post at Fort Hall and begun trade at Cantonment Loring:

> Arriving at Cantonment Loring we were most kindly received by Captain Grant...who invited us into his house, and spread before us all the comforts and many of the luxeries of life, and gave us a comfortable bed under his hospitable roof - all of which none more than ourselves could appreciate, and thus we passed the night - once more in the abodes of civilization. Here Captain Grant is comfortably situated, surrounded by a happy family; with all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, he lives as happily and contentedly as he so well deserves. 35

The transitional nature of Fort Hall, from fur trade to emigrant trade, was also an important aspect of Owen's winter there. By the 1840's, the fur trade had declined throughout the West, although at some posts, such as Fort Hall and Fort Owen, it remained active through the 1850's.[36] As one of the relatively few trading establishments on the Oregon Trail, Fort Hall was ideally situated for trade with the western immigrants. The Hudson's Bay Company initially discouraged trade with American emigrants as an extension of their efforts to deter Yankee settlement of the hotly contested Oregon Territory. However, after the 1846 treaty between Great Britian and



ROUTE OF THE MOUNTED RIFLEMEN, MAY TO OCTOBER, 1849

Figure 2.4: Map showing route of the Mounted Riflemen, 1849.
Source: R. Settle, March of the Mounted Riflemen, 1940.

the United States, and, when the profitability of the emigrant trade became evident, Company policy began to change.[37]

The California Gold Rush began in earnest during the spring and summer of 1849 and greatly increased travel on the Oregon Trial. The sighting of emigrant trains is frequently mentioned in the diaries and journals of the mounted riflemen with whom Owen traded.

By the end of 1849, an estimated 25,000 Americans had reached California via the Oregon Trail.[38] The fact that a great wave of white settlement was only beginning to engulf the West could not have been lost on John Owen. Although it might take several years to impact such remote areas as the Bitterroot Valley, the interim offered a viable business opportunity in trade with the resident fur trappers and Indians.

While the details of Owen's separation from the Mounted Riflemen remains obscure, it is well known that by mid 1850, he had wandered as far from Fort Hall as the Bitterroot Valley. In that year, Father Mengarini, a Jesuit Missionary at St. Mary's reported:

> Encamped near the mission were two Americans, Messrs. Owen and Porter, these gentlemen had already visited the mission and invited me to return their visit. I did so and was kindly received and entertained. 39

The decision to sell the mission improvements was apparently made at the time Owen was camped in the area. Unfortunately, no record exists of the proceedings leading up to the transfer of property. We do know that on November 5, 1850, the sale was finalized. Thus, sutler Owen became "Major" Owen - a title frequently bestowed on the proprietors of trading posts in the fur country.[40] It is here that the story of Fort Owen begins.

John Owen's Agency Years (1856 - 1862)

Following the 1855 Stevens-Flathead Treaty, John Owen was temporarily appointed Special Agent to the Confederated Flathead Nation in 1856, and permanent agent in 1857. He retained the office until 1862. Although Owen's dual position as both Indian agent and proprietor of a trading post engaged in Indian trade was, by all appearances, a conflict of interest, Owen struggled arduously on behalf of the Flathead Nation. His years as agent to the confederated

tribes were plagued with difficulty and frustration at governmental indifference and bureaucratic blunder. Funds necessary to procure needed supplies and to pay agency employees were frequently delayed for many months, or even years, forcing Owen to draw on personal funds and supplies to keep the agency afloat. Owen's rage was often vented in vitriolic letters to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, yet his authority was twice enlarged and extended over additional tribes.[41]

In addition to difficulties in mediating between the confederated tribes and the United States Government, Owen also was beleagured with problems of white settlement in the Bitterroot Valley. The 1855 Flathead Treaty had been interpreted as license to settle the Valley by land-hungry whites. Until Congress ratified the treaty, however, the Valley still belonged to the Flatheads. Owen's position in the resulting conflict was compounded by his own contended claim to 640 acres and that his mercantile interests stood to prosper by white settlement and the resulting increase in trade. When the Stevens-Flathead treaty was finally ratified in 1859, new emigrant trains immediately appeared in the Valley.[42]

Indian-white relations were further strained by hostile confrontations in areas to the west and east of the Bitterroot. In 1857, Dr. R.H. Lansdale, first Flathead Agent, wrote Governor Stevens:

> The position that this people occupy is critical and peculiarly trying...They are placed between the now hostile Blackfeet in the east, and their old neighbors and friends and relatives in the west, who are waging war upon their old friends the whites. Their country is traversed by the paths of western tribes leading to the large game of the eastern plains, and they at any time are liable to incursions of the hostile tribes of the west, who may seek to turn them from their old and steadfast friendship for the whites, or (commit) depredations upon their property as reprisals for their own losses sustained in the prosecution of their own innane and unjustifiable warfare. 42

Owen was authorized in 1857 to move the agency headquarters from the Jocko cabins Lansdale had constructed to Fort Owen, a distance of fifty miles. In addition to the unsubstantial nature of the Jocko

agency buildings, the Jesuit Mission at St. Ignatius was relatively close. The Mission Fathers actively encouraged and taught agricultural methods to the resident Indians.

In 1860, a year after Congressional ratification of the Stevens-Flathead Treaty, Owen established a new Jocko Agency on a "natural millsite" southeast of the present Arlee. In March of that year, the first land payment to the Flathead Nation arrived - a sum of $36,000. Owen was chagrinned to learn that $25,000 of the money had been spent by Government agents to purchase and transport to the Bitterroot, 8,000 pounds of coffee (which Owen later discovered had been salvaged from a boat sunk in the Missouri River), 12,000 pounds of rice, 16,000 pounds of brown sugar, 10,000 pounds of hard bread, 1,761 blankets, six plows, and a few axes, augers, knives, pans, sickles, forks, and hoes.[43] Owen sent a typically scathing letter to the Superintendent of Indian affairs:

> ...the purchase could have been cut down to one half and that amount invested in Heifers would have gone much further toward benefitting the Indians than tons of Coffee, Rice & Hardbread that are now en route for my Agency and shipped too at a very heavy expense. Hard bread is the last thing my Indians require & it would have been much better if flour was necessary to have purchased wheat here in the Bitter Root Valley & had it ground there.... I fear the Indians will not be satisfied in having so large an amount of property a great deal of which is perfectly useless forced upon them in payment for their lands, without their consent ever being asked or obtained.... If the Department will keep the Hard bread, Rice & Coffee at home and encourage the Indian in farming I will make myself responsible for the result. The Flathead are not a barbous people. They know very well that the lands they sold were not to be paid for in hard bread and the like... Their (the Flatheads) advancement in the scale of social life is not promoted in the shipment of trash, they may be pleased for the moment but no permanent good results from the adoption of such a course.....45

Owen used the remaining annuity payment, $11,000, to buy wheat, farm equipment, seeds, and cattle. He also bought used equipment from

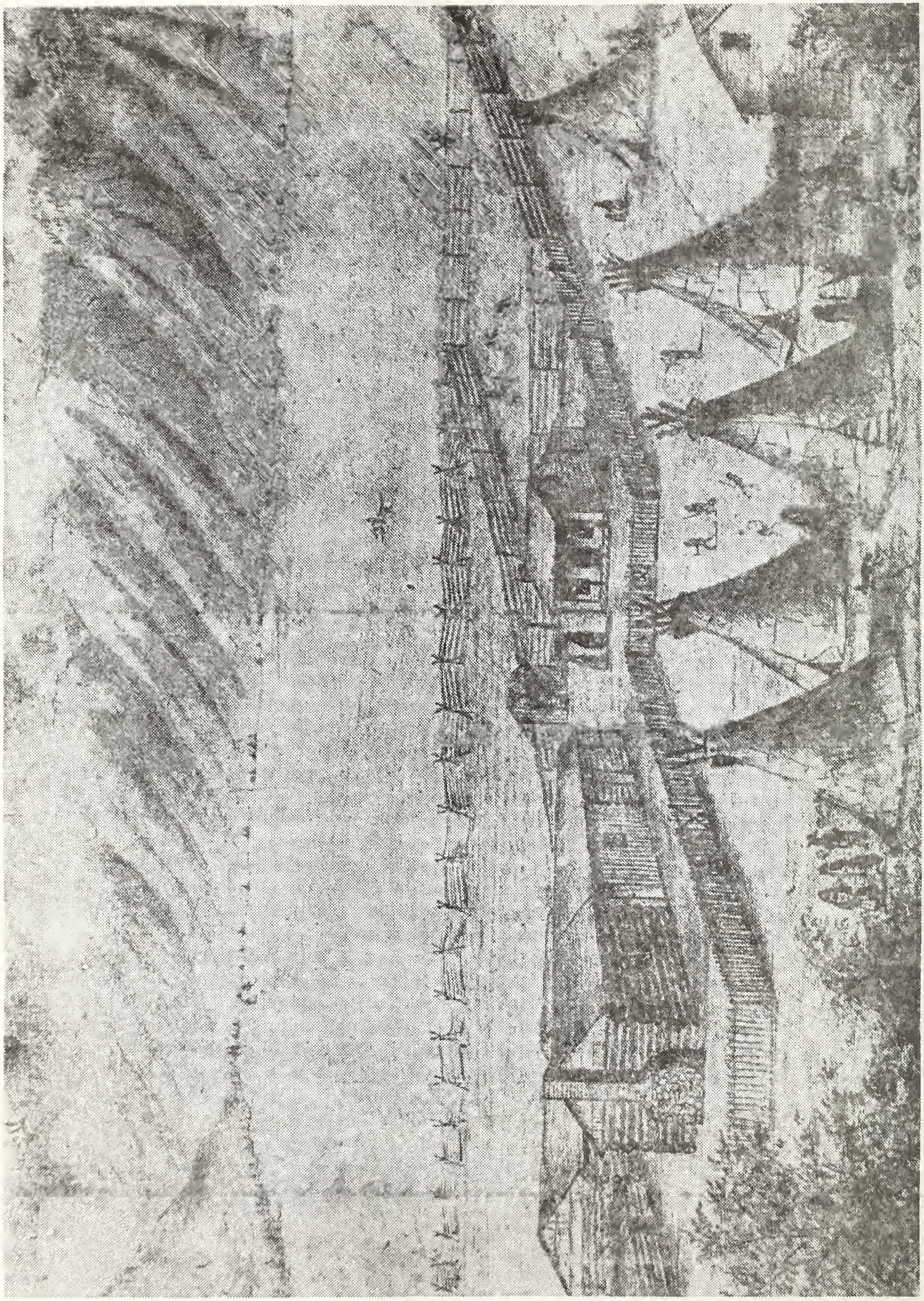


Figure 2.5: Flathead Agency on the Jocko River built by John Owen, 1860.
Source: Mansfield Library, University of Montana

John Mullan, who was then closing out his road project. This included building materials, wagons, a sawmill, and other miscellaneous goods.[46]

In July, 1862, Owen, wearied and disgusted, dispatched the following letter to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs:

> Sir.....The Flathead Agency is so Much Embarrassed for want of the appropriations Made for its support during the 1st and 2nd Sessions of 36" Congress that I wish to be relieved from its charge at your Earliest convenience. I shall leave here in a few days for your office when I hope to see you in person. 47

Flathead Indian historian John Fahey reflected on Owen's disgruntled years as Flathead Agent:

> "With Owen's resignation the Flatheads lost a friend and confidant. Perhaps they sensed Owen's growing disorientation with white men and found in him a reflection of themselves, gradually losing the ability to cope with the machinery of change." 48

John Owen - A Man of Many Hats

In the course of his career as proprietor of the Fort, John Owen played many different roles. In addition to his responsibilities as Indian Agent, he ran the various trading, farming, and milling businesses at Fort Owen and logged over twenty three thousand miles of travel through the Northwest in thirty-four major journeys as well as many shorter trips.

Owen attained a reputation of a gracious host who extended his hospitality and the comforts of his Fort to scores of guests and travelers passing through the region. Christmas and New Years accounts abound with references to tasty pies, hearty egg nogs, music, dancing, and story-telling.

Owen appeared to be extremely devoted to his wife, Nancy, and exhibited a great fondness for her in his journals. Though many fur trappers and traders lived with Native women, few made the effort to sanctify their relationships through marriage. Owen keenly felt his responsibility toward Nancy and, in the absence of a priest, made a public marriage avowal to her in 1865.[49]

For many years, Owen was the most influential pioneer in Western Montana. In March, 1866, he was elected to be a delegate to the Constitutional Convention to be held in Helena, although, apparently, he did not attend the sessions.[50] In September, 1866, Owen was again elected to serve the people of Missoula County, this time as a Legislator. On receiving news of his election, Owen quipped in his journal:

> Truly I thought I had less Enemies in this County than to Send Me to the Legislature.... 51

Owen made preparations to attend the session in Virginia City but decided, at the last minute, not to attend.[52]

In April, 1870, John Owen was defeated in the election for the Missoula-Deer Lodge delegate to the Council, (the upper territorial house), for the Seventh Territorial Assembly. A second election was held before the Seventh Assembly convened, however. Owen has a hold-over delegate in the Eighth Territorial Assembly, held April 14 - May 8, 1873. It is not known whether or not Owen served either of these terms.[53]

Owen's Final Years in the Bitterroot

The decade of the 1860's brought many changes to the Bitterroot Valley as well as to the entire West. In 1860, a trading establishment was built in Hell Gate Ronde on the newly-completed Mullan Road and began to compete with Owen's Fort. Beginning in 1862, a series of gold discoveries in Montana attracted prospectors from the Bitterroot Valley and elsewhere. While the gold camps provided a new outlet for the agricultural produce of the Bitterroot, Fort Owen was no longer the only bastion of civilization in the Territory.[54]

Though the completion of the new commericail grist mill, in 1865, intensified the economic life of the Fort, Owen began to spend more and more time traveling to the settlements around the Territory. Owen's wife, Nancy, became seriously ill in August, 1868 and died on September 24th.

Following her death Owen began to decline. He had always been a social drinker, but he now drank heavily. Owen's business affairs lapsed and he suffered severe financial reverses. In 1872 the Fort Owen property was sold at sheriff's auction to pay his debts and Washington McCormick became the new owner.[55]

John Owen had been taken to Helena a year before the sale of the Fort on account of his increasing dementia. In Helena he was confined to St. John's Hospital and was there received into the Catholic Church. In 1874, he was declared legally insane. Early in 1877 the territorial legislature passed a bill to establish an insane asylum. Governor Potts vetoed the bill and, as a result, John Owen was deported from the Territory on February 17, 1877. Owen's old friend and fellow Mason, William E. Bass, accompanied the now old man back to his family in Pennsylvania.[56]

Owen lived another twelve years in Pennsylvania, while the walls of his beloved Fort melted back into the earth. On July 12, 1889, John Owen died - only four months before Montana was granted Statehood.

FORT OWEN

A Business Venture

As proprietor of the newly acquired St. Mary's improvements, John Owen promptly renamed the structure Fort Owen. With his own establishment used as a base of operations, Owen carried on his enterprise throughout the Northwest ranging from The Dalles to the West, Fort Benton to the East, Fort Colville to the North, and Fort Hall to the South. During his absence from the Fort, Owen left the management of his holdings in the hands of men such as Frank B. Owen (John Owen's brother), Caleb Irvine, Henri Chase, and Thomas Harris. (see Appendix D for biographical sketches of these men)

Scant business accounts and assorted memorandum in early journal

entries indicate that Owen managed a fairly consistent, if not increasing trade with the Indians, halfbreeds, and the few other whites in the area.[57] From these he obtained furs, livestock, or labor in return for merchandise.

During this first year of ownership, Owen's business transactions grossed approximately $1,800. Declining in the second year, and again in the third, transactions handled amounted to $1,428 in 1851 and $924 in 1852. 1853 set an all time low for the trade room with only $517 of trade taking place.

During 1854, John made two trips to the Dalles and Fort Walla Walla in response to increased patronage at the Fort. The presence of the Mullan party at Cantonment Stevens, approximately 12 miles south of Fort Owen, during the winter of 1853 - 1854 reflected a significant increase in business--transactions amounted to $2,567. Although the survey party left the area, volume of trade remained high at Fort Owen due in part to the members of the party who remained in the Bitterroot Valley and to the pioneer stockmen traveling north from the Emigrant Road. The Fort grossed $2,100 in 1855 and in 1856, $1,855.

Increased patronage at the Fort during the mid-50's also related indirectly to the local tribes. In 1855, Owen benefitted from trade during the Flathead Treaty Council negotiations, with both whites and Indians frequenting the Fort for needed staples. The post prospered, too, when in 1856 Stevens appointed Owen as special agent to the Flatheads--Owen established Agency headquarters at the Fort. Finally, an influx of settlers from Washington and Idaho between 1856 and 1858 during strained Indian-White relations, assured yet further prosperity for Fort Owen.

By 1857, Fort Owen had become a major trading center in the region. The volume of business in that year amounted to $4,926 and in the following year $3,181. The number of traders bringing their stock to winter in the Bitterroot Valley increased, as did the number of individuals who were

immigrating to the area from the eastern United States.

1859 and 1860 marked the most lucrative years for Fort Owen, with the volume of sales reaching $9,571 and $6,566 respectively. This latter total represents only six months of transactions owing to the lack of records concerning the last half of 1860. Contributing to the financial success were the Fort Owen saw and grist mills which had, since their 1857 renovation, become a more pronounced source of income.[58] Yet another primary source of Fort Owen's income came from the U.S. Army. At this time Lieutenant John Mullan had returned to the area while constructing the military wagon raod between Walla Walla and Fort Benton. Forced into winter quarters 110 miles from the Fort, the construction crew nevertheless traded considerably with Fort Owen. As with members of the previous Stevens Survey, some individuals remained in the Valley after completion of the road.

As more white settlers moved into the area during the 1860's, the nature of business at Fort Owen began to change. Increased mining activities in the area induced Owen to supply the fortune hunters with food and various other provisions. He constantly observed wagons loaded with vegetables traveling the roads to and from the mines and continually received reports of mining activities in the area gulches.

The final phase of economic transitions at Fort Owen under the proprietorship of John Owen occurred with the completion of a commercial grist mill in 1865. The mill quickly became the most important source of income, its profits surpassing those of the trade room. On October 11, 1866, Owen contemplated the increased population in the region and the effects it may have on his overall agricultural production, calculating the quantity of flour required to supply the people of Montana Territory for the next seven months:

> The Pop. Estimated at 30000 Souls & they using 1¼# flour pr day = 37500 #s pr day which is Equal to 18½ "tons" pr day which Makes taking this Month at 30 days--555 tons pr Month--Equal to 3885 tons Equal to Seven Million Seven hundred & 70 thousand #s which Would require say 30#s flour to Bu of Wheat 259000 Bus. No fears of a Surplus of Flour Although crops are good and flour due.... 59

The late 1860's, in general, witnessed a gradual curtailment of activity at Fort Owen. In his journals, Owen speaks of unnamed influences working against the Fort and the Bitterroot Valley. Here, Owen likely refers to the growing importance of Hell Gate, a fledgling village more advantageously situated along the Mullan Road after its completion in 1860. For Frank Worden and C.P. Higgins, it was the logical location to construct a trading post, presenting competition for John Owen. As the community of Hell Gate transformed into a commercial center, boasting a variety of businesses, the Valley's residents, whose needs were once satisfied by Fort Owen, turned to the newly established community for security and trade.[60]

Trade

The scarcity of trading posts in the Eastern fringes of the then Washington Territory proved advantageous for Fort Owen and its proprietor. Fort Connah, the Hudson's Bay Company post 90 miles to the North offered little competition. Fort Benton was 400 miles to the East, The Dalles 600 miles to the West. Fort Colville was 600 miles to the North, and Fort Hall even further South. In addition to provisions, Fort Owen, the haven in the Bitterroot Valley, offered hospitality, relative safety from hostile tribes, and fertile pasture lands for those traveling north from the Oregon Trail. The Bitterroot Valley proved to be a profitable and comfortable wintering ground for those trading along the Trail.

Owen's Ledger and Journals indicate that he became banker, credit manager and merchant for the men who traded at Fort Owen. Frank Owen, Caleb Irvine, Thomas W. Harris, Captain John Mullan, Michael Ogden, Angus McLeod, David Pattee, Walter DeLacy, Peter Tofft and a host of others whose names were entered on the pages of the account book, obtained provisions from the Fort.

The Journals and Ledger of John Owen contain numerous lists of

unexplained merchandise. Whether these were items needed at Fort Owen, obtained on trading expeditions, supplied to individuals, or current inventory is not known. One such account appearing in the 1852 Journal may be a list of supplies procured on a previous trading expedition to Walla Walla. In it, Owen mentions items -- one crank, one set of wheels, one bolting cloth -- needed for the grist mill, constructed during April and May of 1852. A partial list of the unpublished material follows:

12 Pr. Sct. Blankt
13 Wht Do
10 Shirts
10 Cut Hdkcfs
10 Scalp Knives
15 # Vermillion
100 # Powder
Squaw beads
White enamel beads
Blue " "
Hawk Bells
10 Mirrors
500 Trout hooks
5 dz. combs
#'s Coffee
Sugar
Tea
Lentil Soup
Candle Wicks
Thermometer
Rings and Sinches for Pack Saddle
1 # Rhubarb
2 # Alum
AM Brand Iron for McDonald
1 Hand Vice
1 Screwdriver
1 dz. Knives & Forks
1 dz. large Tin Pans
1 dz. Tin Plates
Few Buckskin Needles
Few Heavy Buckskin Gloves
1 Set Chess men
Soldering Iron and Solder
Assorted Screws
Assorted Tacks

61

Yet another unpublished list from the 1854-1855 Journal consists possibly of the types of furs brought in or inventoried in the fur room. It appears as follows:

295 Bears
69 " Small
10 " Large
2 " Small
1 Wolverine
6 Wolves
1 Red Fox
1 + Do
3 Lynx
1 Badger
2 Com (?) Lynx
6 Martin
3 Fishers
6 Otter
32 Grizzley
1 " Com
5 Cubs
7 Elk
2 Cubs

62

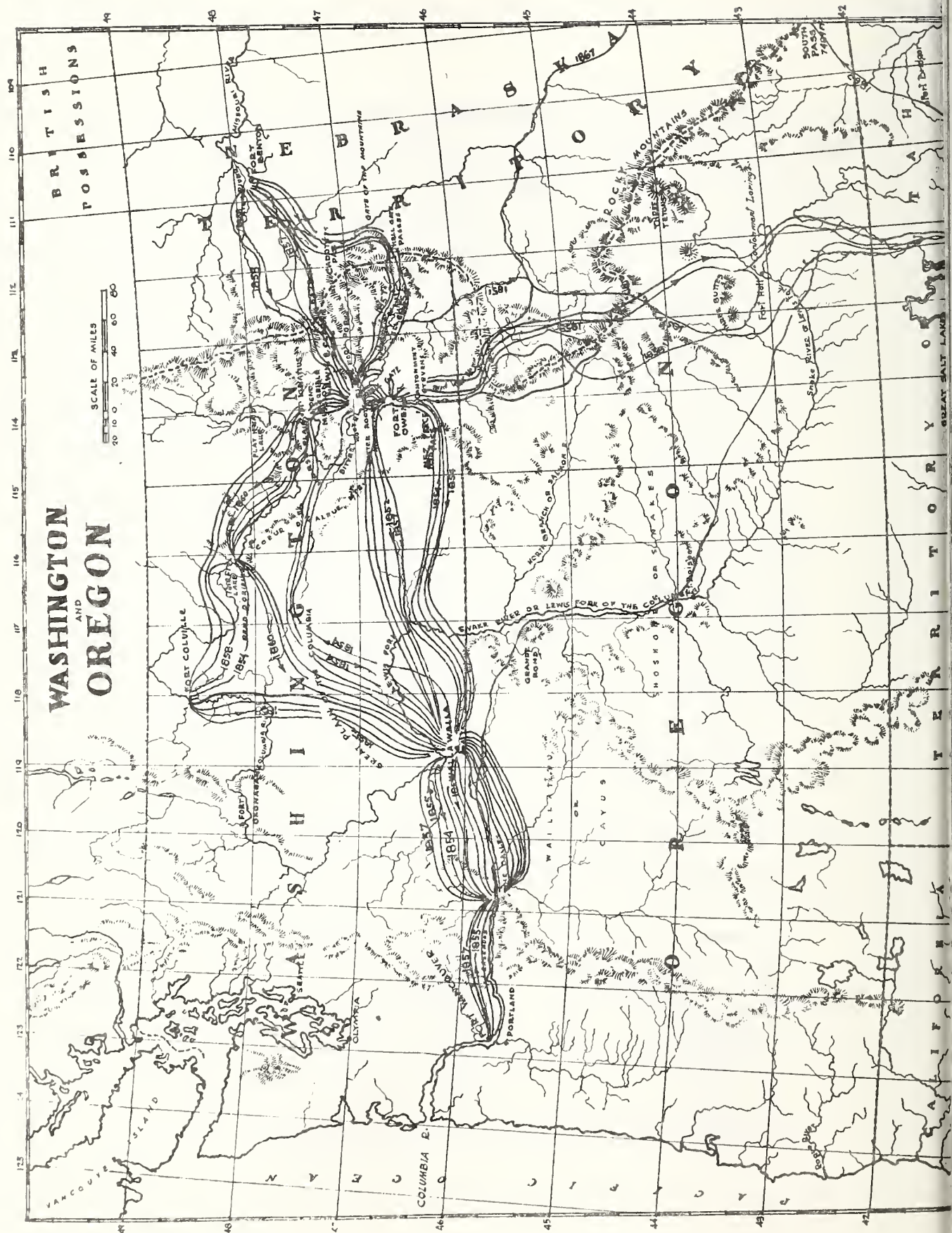


Figure 2.6: Map showing trade routes of John Owen
Source: Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, 1927

MAP II

In George Weisel's Men and Fur Trade of the Northwest Frontier, a complete list of business transactions including the individuals and the merchandise supplied at the Fort is compiled. Specifics such as total amounts ordered and quantities supplied remains unknown. (see Appendix C)

Though limited in variety and quantity, the items available in Fort Owen's trade room satisfied the simple needs of Owen's customers. Both fresh and cured meat were available at the Fort, although the majority of people provided themselves with the desired meat and fish. Other staples such as flour, sugar, coffee, salt, and baking soda were popular items listed in the ledger. Yet, even their numbers dimmed in comparison with those relating to ammunition. For obvious reasons, including hunting and trapping, it was one of the most common purchases in the trade room. Owen supplied a variety of cottons and muslins in addition to pre-made clothing such as leggings and shirts. Beads, bells, and paint were frequently purchased by both men and women, White as well as Indians. Blankets were quite marketable, becoming desirable replacements for the cumbersome buffalo robe. Owen also carried such luxuries as tobacco and liquor, although the latter eventually became almost non-existant on the trade room shelves.[63]

Cash transactions at Fort Owen were limited. Furs and livestock were traded on credit. Labor executed on the Fort, grist mill, saw mill, or farm was exchanged for merchandise.

Agriculture: The Farms

As the new proprietor of the Mission properties, Owen began at once to plant crops and labored constantly to encourage and develop farming in the area. Becoming involved in a variety of agricultural activities, Owen planted grain fields, gardens, and orchards, brought in agricultural implements, and introduced improved livestock in order to supply the residents of the Fort with food. The Fort, after

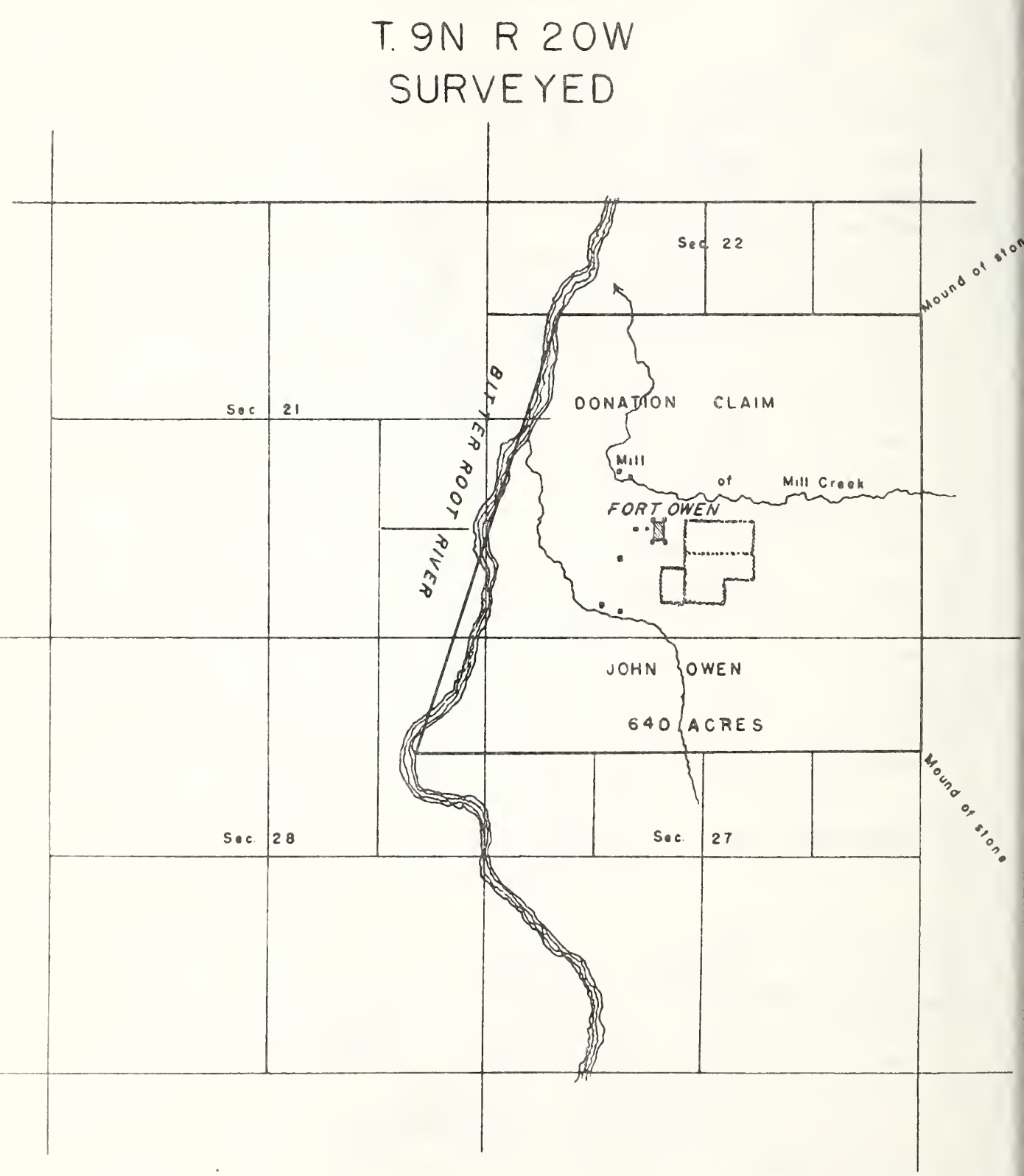


Figure 2.7: Map of the Donation Claim of Major John OWen prepared by Walter W. DeLacy, 1863
Source: George Weisel, Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier

all, was their major source of subsistence.

As early as 1852, Journal entries written during the spring indicate that the garden and fields were plowed and planted with cabbage, turnips, parsnips, onions, potatoes, beans, corn, tobacco, wheat, and oats. The wheat and oat crops were cut and bound in the fall, amounting to 1,000 packages each.[64]

The location and acreage of the fields surrounding the compound can only be surmised. Only two accounts give some hint of the acreage under production. The 1863 survey by Walter W. DeLacy indicates fields to the Southeast of Owen's donation claim, measuring about 40 acres. An 1865 survey by Owen and a Major Graham resulted in the following measurements:

> Enclosed and fine the old field to contain 41.48 New Land 22.4 Pasture 42.82 Making in all nearly 108 acres [65]

The fields were cultivated each spring, planted with wheat and oats, and barring any catastrophe, harvested in the fall. However, a number of natural disasters did plague the Owen farmlands including a lack of rain, floods, early frost, grasshoppers, and worms. These caused Owen to remark a number of times that "this can be no country for the farmers" despite the overall success of the lands.[66]

Journal entries from 1856 indicate Owen's interest in the agricultural prospects for the Bitterroot Valley. On Tuesday, May 20, Owen recounted:

> Planted some Corn to day it is Corn I got at Fort Benton The River Indians I learn from Mr Dawson raised a considerable of it on the Missouri and it is one of their leading articles of trade with the Am. fur Co. I am planting More for Experiment I do not know how it will succeed. 67

On Monday, June 2, Owen continued:

> Sowed some Turnips & Carrots as there is no appearance of those Sown by old Piere on the 17th Ultimo I also sowed a few osage Seeds as an Experiment to see how they will do in this region. 68

Owen also planted his garden regularly in the Spring. A June, 1856 entry finds him contemplating the delayed growth of his produce--potatoes, cabbage, turnips, carrots, beets, corn, onions, citron, pumpkins, and squash. Owen concluded, however, that he planted "plenty early enough."[69]

After 16 years in the Bitterroot Valley, Owen acquired his first apple trees. On October 16, 1866, he reported:

> Mr Frank Way from French Town called to See Me about Some fruit trees he has for Sale. Having ordered 1000 trees by a Mr. Rich from Walla Walla last Augst. I declined purchasing any More. I am ashamed of Not having a fine fruit bearing orchard after being here Some 16 Yr's. 70

During April of 1867, Owen "commenced taking up and setting out" some 200 fruit trees. Although he expressed initial disappointment in their appearance, the trees were "budding finely" by May 13.[71]

1867 proved disastrous for Owen's orchard with the infestation of grasshoppers. On June 7, Owen noted:

> the Grasshopper doing considerable damage. They are cutting My young trees. Some of the Crops have been completely destroyed by them. Gloomy prospects -- 72

After departing from the area in mid-June, Owen found that by the 27th, the grasshoppers were again working on his young trees. Owen commented: "Grasshoppers again Working on My young trees -- Not being satisfied with having stripd them they are not attempting to girdle them. I am discouraged truly."[74]

In March of 1868, Owen again planted his apple orchard, despite the failure of the previous year's crop. He noted his uncertainty in the following Journal entry:

> Monday March 30, 1868 Set out Some apple trees Mr. Ritz Sent Mr. I trust that quite a Numer of those I Set outlast Spring May bud again & Make trees yet. Although I Must confess that I have great fears of Many out of Nearly One thousand Will Ever Make any thing. 75

Throughout the Journals, Owen accounts for his accumulation of stock. As early as 1852, he is branding. The first entry in the 1854-1855 Jounral indicates that Owen and a small party are bound for the Dalles and are transporting:

> Animals 11 Mules, branded 21 on left hip 4 American
> Mares 21 on left shldr 1 Am horse 21 Do 2 Indian
> Mares & 4 Ind horses brd 21 on left hip 1 Yearling
> Cl Colt ½ breed not branded Number in all with two
> Colt 24 head 76

In addition to the horses and mules, Owen's stock consisted of cattle, sheep, chickens, pigs, and at one point, a goat.

The Mills

The grist mill and saw mill, initially constructed by the Jesuit Fathers at St. Mary's, proved to be integral to the operation of Fort Owen and the agricultural development of the Bitterroot Valley. First mention of the mills under Owen's proprietorship is made on April 1, 1852 with the typically brief journal entry "Frank Making Mill."[77] The May 23 journal entry notes "Raised Mill Frame."[78] Although there is no further mention of mill construction, there are frequent entries noting "grinding."[79]

Owen continued to operate the mills, both for personal and commercial use throughout the early years. He was frequently required to make some adjustment to improve their production.

In 1856, Owen contracted with the millwirght, David Pattee, to reconstruct both the saw mill and the grist mill for $1,600 and $2,000 respectively. Pattee began construction on the grist mill first. Owen revealed in a January 10, 1857 entry that Pattee made little headway due to extreme cold. The next entry occurs on April 9 of the same year. Owen wrote:

> ...Mr. Pattee is rushing the Mill with the intention of running the old burrs for the present until the dress is put on the New ones.... 80

Pattee continued work on the Mill throughout April, struggling

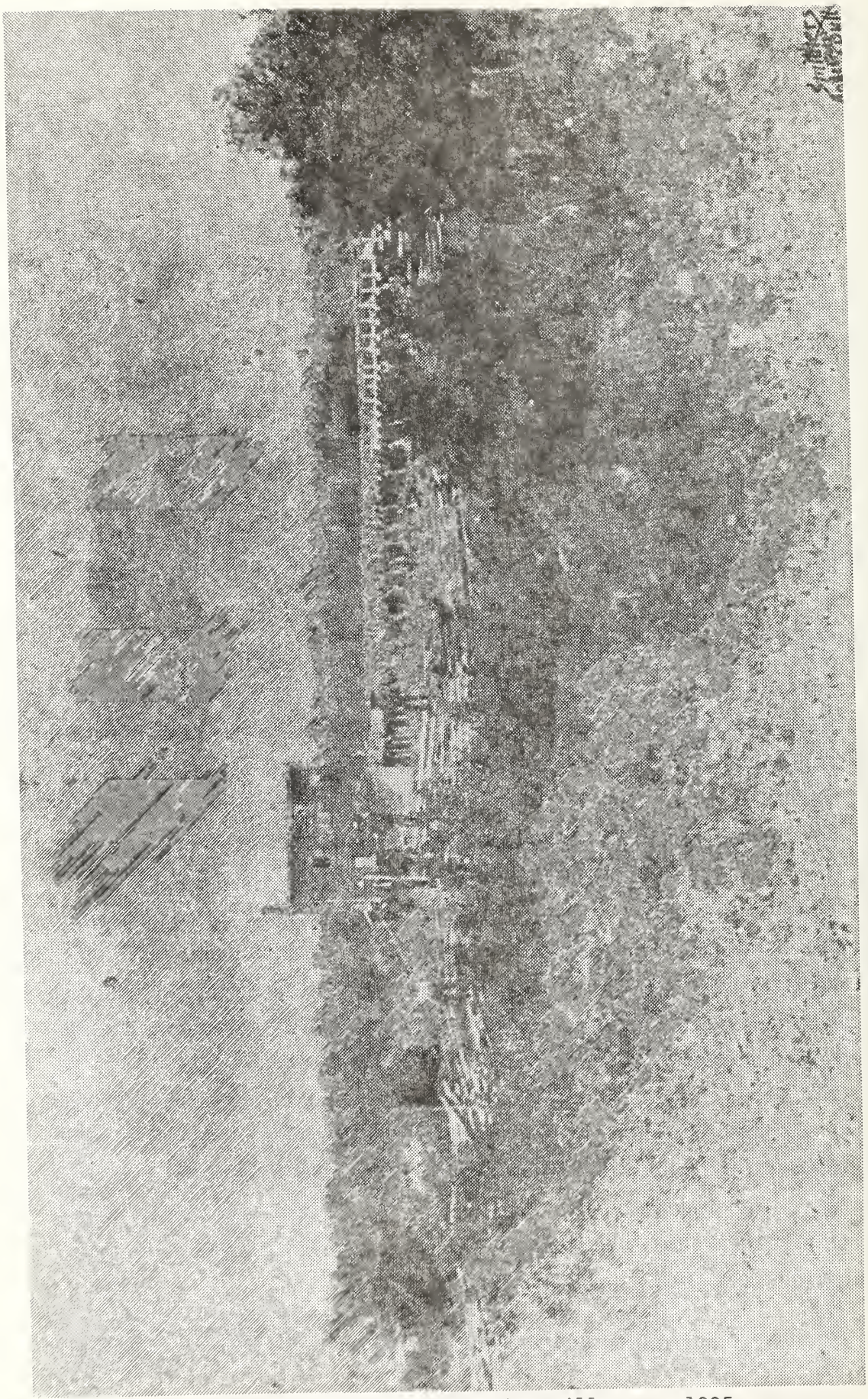


Figure 2.8: Fort Owen grist mill, ca. 1885
Source: Montana Historical Society

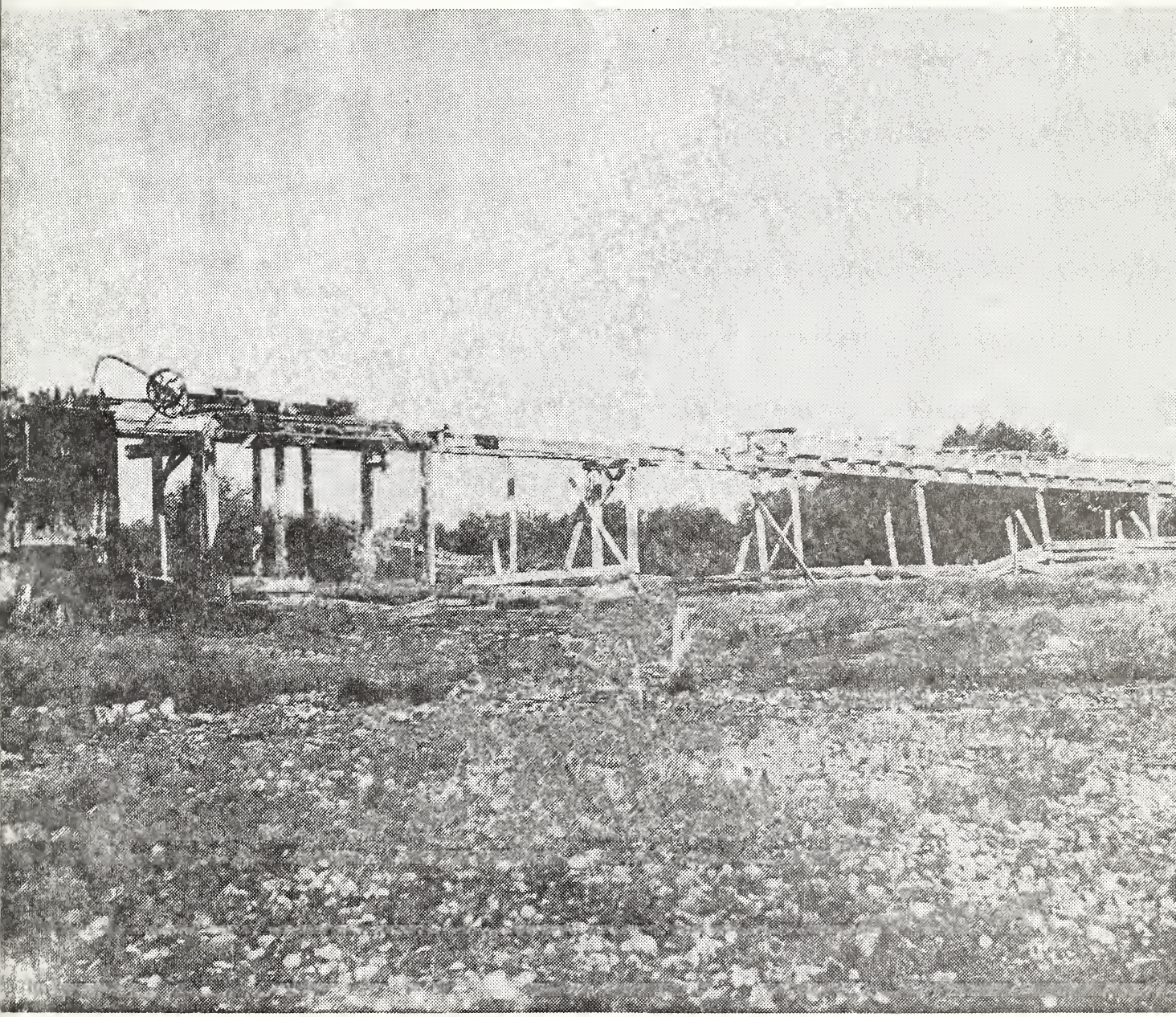


Figure 2.9: Detail of grist mill flume, ca. 1890
Source: Montana Historical Society

over a lack of water power. In the meanwhile, a shortage of flour forced some to resort to coffee mills which ground "a course flour which was better than none."[81] After installing a different wheel which required less water the "little mill" began to perform. Finally, on April 27, 1857, the grist mill ground 1,000 pounds of flour from 16 bushels of wheat.[82]

In mid May, 1857, construction began on the saw mill, intended for producing the lumber to be used in the Fort reconstruction. By May 26, the 18' x 36' frame was complete.[83] Work continued through June and July with workmen completing the crank shaft, millirons, rag wheel, and water wheel shaft. The mill was running on August 21, yet Owen related that it didn't come up to his expectations.[84]

In January, 1863, Owen contracted with George M. Windes, a nephew of Jefferson Davis, to construct "in the most workmanlike manner" a commercial grist mill, three stories high, measuring 22' x 32'. (see Appendix E). In addition, he was to construct a 14' overshot wheel, granaries, flume, and other necessary machinery for the entire milling operation. Windes commenced work immediately. Beginning in March, Windes and two assistants, Peters and McWhirk hauled timbers to the mill site. Finally, on June 2, they started raising the frame. On July 21, 1863, Owen observed that Mr. Windes had erected "as good a frame" he'd ever seen.[85] On August 7, Windes commenced laying the sill for the flume planned to be "750' long with sufficient capacity to Carry some 1500 in of Water."[86] Tuesday, October 20, found the mill without its contractor, Windes having left for the mines. Eleven days later, the mill stood just as Windes had left it. Owen entered the following in his journal:

> Mr. Windes is a Mechanic beyond a doubt. In fact his work shows for itself--"He is a Millwright" but his Moral character is not the best--He will lie--He will tattle and Make Mischief in fact he is devoid of principle--Socially he has no honesty--Pleasing in his Manners--affable in his association--Still there is a Want of confidence in his Moral honesty--It is Strange

> but I fear too true--But a Nephew of "Jeff. Davis" should show the Breding of the South-- 87

On November 15, 1863, Owen departed for Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., leaving Thomas Harris to manage the properties. Upon returning fourteen months later, Owen found the mill had "been Enclosed but poorly," and wished nothing had been done to it in his absence.[88]

On April 21, 1865, Owen wrote that Windes has returned and would be employed at "$8.00 per day and subsistence to take charge and Supt. the finishing New Mill."[89]

During the summer of 1865, all energy was directed towards finishing the new mill. Windes hired a crew consisting of W.E. Bass, William Raup, Collins, Sherman Roberts, John Chatfield, Devenpeck, and George Carley, not excluding Mrs. Devenpeck who worked on the bolting cloth.[90] All were busy laying the second and third floors, installing machinery, and building the flume, wheels, and timbers for support.

The grist mill absorbed the interest of the surrounding community throughout construction. Owen, as would be expected, was absorbed in its progress, but for a more competitive reason. On August 14, he reveals:

> In fact I Must Move Heaven and Earth to have it Started by 20" Next Mo. in order to receive the Bonus of $1,000 in Wheat offered Me by Mr. Thos. W. Harris on 16" March & acceded to by Jno Owen on 17" 91

Upon its completion Friday, September 15, 1865, Owen expressed his relief:

> Mr. Thos Harris in to See New Mill Start--and it was a triumph. Mr. Windes has certainly Excelld himself. All hands in good humor. Ground Some 60 or More Bu Wheat. "200 Bu Wheat due from 3 Mile Creek (Location of Harris' Farm) 92

Owen was publicly praised for his accomplishment. Jubilant over his success he proudly exclaimed:

> In fact Myself and particularly the Mill have rec'd several Very flattering Notices--Of Course it pleases Me to See that My Efforts in trying to promote the farming interests of this Valley are appreciated I have Spent Some Sixteen Years and am able to realize fully the Many great changes that have been Made and are Continually being Made--My Mill Was a great success and of course gives a Much greater importance to the farmer. For he Now Sees that his wheat can be Made Marketable at a good figure. Flour Will Command $15.00 for a long time Yet "Per 100#."[93]

In a letter addressed to Samuel T. Hauser in July, 1866, Owen again proclaims the success of the new mill. In this case, it was to secure a $3,000 or $5,000 loan to purchase wheat in the upcoming autumn.

> Some 4,000 Bu. of wheat was sown last spring--one half in the Bitter Root the other half in the Hell Gate Rond Valley. My mill with what wheat it can grind pays me from $10.00 to $15.00 per hour. It is a good peice of property and cuts me many a Dollar. I am going to Cotton Wood (Deer Lodge) today--at which place please write me a receipt of this. 94

After completion of the commerical grist mill, Owen appears to have lost interest in the saw mill. He apparently leased it to Thomas B. Rollins on October 1, 1865.[95]

The grist mill, however, remained the major source of income during the Fort's later years. Substantial wheat shipments to various regions throughout the country were neither unusual nor infrequent.

In 1877, Legislative Council Member and long time friend of John Owen, W. E. Bass, took Owen East and left him with his family. The grist mill continued operating under various managers, the property now owned by Washington J. McCormick.

By the late 1880's, considerable controversy had arisen between the grist mill owner who needed water for mill power and the farmers who needed water for irrigation. The mill was burned c. 1889, perhaps deliberately.

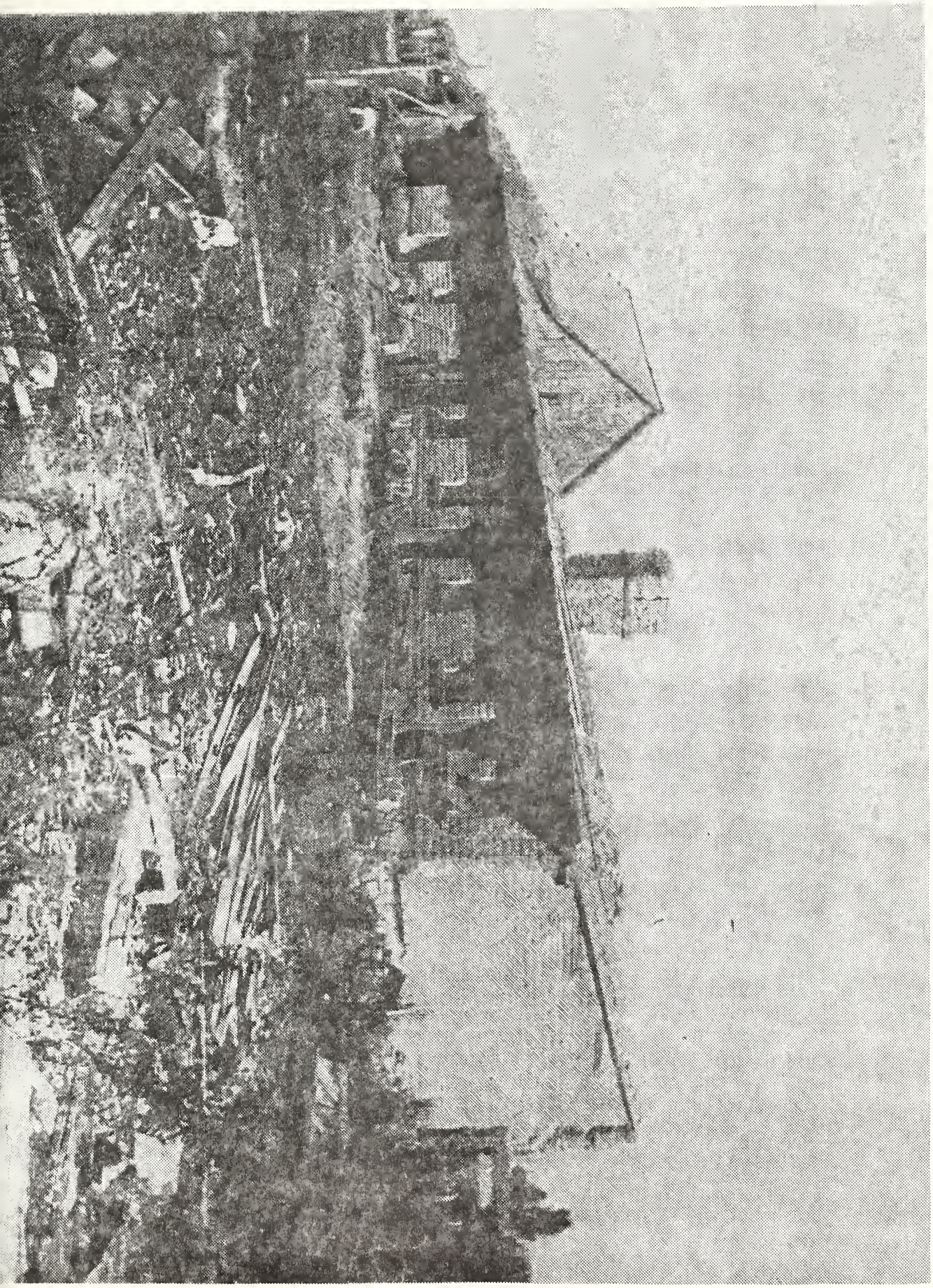


Figure 2.10: East Barracks, ca. 1900.
Source: Mansfield Library, University of Montana

LIFE AT FORT OWEN

Fort Hospitality

The letters and journals of John Owen reveal the great extent to which the adobe fort in the Bitterroot Valley served as a bastion of civilization in a remote, and often threatening, wilderness. James A. Garfield in 1872 visited the Bitterroot Valley and spent a night at Fort Owen. On August 22 he recorded in his diary:

> ....He (John Owen) seems to have lived like a prince here in the wilderness. His fine wines and luxurious appointments have been the theme of many army officers who have served in the West. 96

In addition to army officers, Owen entertained an amazingly wide variety of guests at the Fort, including Indians, trappers, traders, missionaries, travelers, and settlers. To a trail weary traveler ever alert to the possibility of attack from hostile Blackfeet, Fort Owen must have indeed seemed a haven.

The Fort offered a dormitory room with real beds as well as a private guest room complete with a fireplace and the convenience of shelves and a closet. Fine wines and brandy, erudite conversation about the war or Indian Policy, or a game of backgammon, cribbage, or whist further diminished the weariness of the trail. Owen frequently recorded these evenings in his journals:

> "Wash Harris called & passed the Evening Had his banjo With him which he plays very well...." 97

> "Passed a very pleasant Evening with Mrs. Genl. Meagher & other Ladies. Played a few games of Back Gammon with Mrs. M and was Nobly defeated - Genl Meagher reached here in the after Noon - Gav him a Salute from our little Howitzer. Had a Visit from the Revd Father Giorda who remained to tea Passed a very pleasant Evening with the Ladies..." 98

Owen's Library

Among other "appointments" Owen maintained an extensive library

(for the time and place) of several hundred volumes. Lieutenant John Mullan remarked that it was "the finest library I have seen on this north Pacific coast."[99] Fort Owen historian George Weisel documented the titles of the few surviving works from Owen's collection in the early 1950's. In that list were books covering a surprisingly wide spectrum of topics and interests including Dicken's Complete Works, Sir Walter Scott's Wavery Novels, John Lingard's A History of England, and The Writings of Thomas Jefferson.[100] A number of these books are preserved at the University of Montana Mansfield Library. (Refer to Appendex F for complete list of surviving books)

Holidays

Celebrations for such holidays as Christmas and Independence Day provided a break from the regular routine at Fort Owen. Owen almost always commented in his journals on the extent and nature of these festivities.

> December 31, 1855.... ...Another Year has Closed upon us....We had a pleasant Christmas With Some of the good things of this World Sufficient Brandy for Punches and Mince Pies which were got up in very good Style, at least we all thought So from the demonstrations Made when the Cook placed them before us at Dinner.... 101

> January 1, 1857.... The Year Commences with unusual Severity...Capt. Chase and Bro Frank got up a Nice pudding for our New Years dinner and Mrs Chase gave a tea party to My old Wife and Ladies of the fort about the first one Ever having been given here by a Lady. The only objection urged was that the gentlemen were Excluded Entirely let it pass for We Gent's spent a pleasant Evening in a game of Whist which was beautifully Wound up with a lunch and a bowl of hot Punch. 102

> January 1, 1861.... The Christmas Week has passed & We Wind up the holidays with a party to Night In fact it has been Nothing but dancing & feasting for the last past ten Nights. Mr. Blake, Irvine, and Harris have reflected much Cr on themselves for the very liberal Manner in which

they Contributed to the Comfort & amusement of the Stranger guests - The one Armed fiddler Much amused a Bleachd Crownd Doctor.... In fact it was a long time to be remembered in the Rky Mts. Our Grand Children Will have it handed down to them by their Ancestors.... 103

July 4, 1854... Made some demonstrations for our 78 Anniversary raised the National stars & Strips Went up & spent the night with Lieut. Mullan.... 104

July 4, 1864.... A Gun at Sun rise from our 6 lb. Howitzer announced the 89" Anniversary of our National Independ- I trust that the time hon'd flag the We inherited from our fathers does this day Wave over Every foot of our Territory.... I took a ride out 3 Mile Creek to see the Strangers from the East.... Mrs. Harris gave us a very Nice dinner. New potatoes Green Peas Lettuce Onions &c &c..... 105

School

For the benefit of the Indian and half-breed children at Fort Owen, a number of whom had been taken in by Owen and Nancy, Owen hired P. MacDonald to teach school in December, 1858. MacDonald left the following April, but school continued, intermittently, whenever a suitable tutor was available. By 1862, ten children were attending school at the Fort. [106]

Owen's attempt to educate the children he and Nancy took in often ended in disappointment. On October 25, 1866, he wrote:

.....My Boys ran away yesterday & as Yet have not retd I find I can do Nothing with them So I am determined to let them run with the Indians & have Nothing More to do with them.... 107

Family Life

John Owen and his wife, Nancy, never had any children of their own, yet Owen was obviously fond of children and frequently wrote in his journals about the children of his friends and acquaintenances. Owen

believed strongly in the importance of sanctifying his relationship with Nancy, a custom followed by few of the Western trappers and traders. On January 8, 1858, Owen recorded in his journal:

> ....Myself Mr Harris & Mr Irvine did this day Sign marriage contracts with our Indian Wives I have often thought of the Correctness of it & in the absence of any person duly authorized to perform the Marriage Ceremony We did it in ourselves in the presence of Witnesses I have been living pleasantly with My old Wife Since the fall of 49 and in case of accident I should feel Much hurt if I had not properly provided for her according to law.... 108

Food

Food is another topic upon which John Owen frequently commented in his journals. His physical appearence, five feet eight inches tall and nearly two hundred pounds in weight, coroborates his love for good food. From the earliest journal entries in 1852 to those in the late 1860's, it can be surmised that the diet of the Fort builder and his dependents consisted of a combination of domestic and wild foods. Cattle, pigs, and chickens were raised at the Fort and the journal frequently notes "Killed Beef" or "killd Pig 110 pounds 6 Mos old." Just as often, Nancy provided the dinner table with a "fine string of trout" or one of the hunters brought in a "fine Mess Mt. Grouse."

The Fort also boasted a garden with all of the usual garden vegetables including potatoes, carrots, parsnips, melons, peas, beans, corn, tomatoes, etc. Nancy and the other women of the Fort paid great attention to wild berry seasons including strawberry, service berry, and huckleberry. Following a series of journal entries noting "Nancy off Strawberrying" comes "Strawberries fine indeed" and "Strawberries and Cream."

Special attention was given to the preparation of Christmas and

New Year's feasts. New Year's dinner in 1858 is typical of the repast enjoyed at these holidays:

> Mrs Harris got us up a very Nice roast of Beef trimd With Sundry Vegetab all of Which was Nicely closed with a rich plum pudding and a few Mince pies from our Christmas feast to Say Nothing about a very Strange resurrection of a very Mysterious Cache of Sundry bottles of brandy and whiskey.... 109

Feasts such as these represented the best of times at Fort Owen and contrast sharply with the leaner days Owen describes in April, 1865:

> My little dab of Meat gone So we are on Bread & potatoes again - Dry living - Old Wife Mounted old Mike & put out to try her luck fishing. ....The old Wife ret'd with a fine String of trout. 110

THE WORLD AROUND FORT OWEN

The Stevens Survey

In November, 1852, the election of Democrat Franklin Pierce as the country's fourteenth President insured a vigorous policy of exploration and settlement of the vast domain extending from the Mississippi to the Pacific. The following March, Congress formed the new Territory of Washington from the northern half of Oregon Territory.

Army Major Isaac I. Stevens applied for and received the governorship of the newly formed territory. In addition to his assigned duties as governor, Stevens was charged with the superintendency of Indian Affairs and the exploration and mapping of the northern route for a transcontinental railroad. Governor Stevens planned to survey a route from the source of the Mississippi River to Puget Sound. The principle party under Stevens departed St. Paul in the Spring of 1853 for an overland journey to Olympia, capitol of Washington Territory.

By September of 1853, the Stevens party reached Fort Owen where

Stevens issued a proclamation declaring himself to be governor of Washington Territory and stated his interest in learning the dispositions of the native tribes. Before continuing westward, Stevens ordered Lieutenant John Mullan to establish a camp from which to carry our further explorations.

Mullan purchased a stove, stove pipe, nails, and windows at Fort Owen and erected crude, but comfortable log huts about 12 miles south of the Fort. The camp was dubbed Cantonment Stevens in honor or Governor Isaac I. Stevens.

Mullan's party maintained their Bitterroot encampment through the following autumn, making frequent visits to Fort Owen. When the survey party departed the Valley, on September 19, 1854, they left "with feelings of true and heartfelt regret." [111]

The Stevens-Mullan survey brought to Fort Owen for the first time a number of individuals who later bacame familiar visitors and customers at the Fort, and who made major contributions to the development of the Northwest. Included were Captain C.P. Higgins, founder of the towns of Hell Gate and Missoula, Frederick Burr, interpreter and assistant to Mullan, and Thomas Adams, assistant topographer, first agent to the Flathead, Kutenai, and Pend d'Oreille Indians, and early Montana gold-seekers. [112] Also in Stevens' party was Gustavus Sohon, a German-born private who was a talented interpreter and artist.[113] Sohon sketched the earliest known rendering of Fort Owen on July 7, 1854.[114]

Construction of the Mullan Road

Lieutenant John Mullan again visited Fort Owen during the winter of 1859-1860. He had been assigned command of the construction of a military road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton, connecting the navigation heads of the Columbia and Missouri Rivers. Mullan was assisted by engineers P.J. Engle, Conway R. Howard, Walter DeLacy, and

Gustavus Sohon. A winter camp, Cantonment Jordon, was constructed on "the left bank of the St. Regis DeBorgia, about ten miles from its mouth." [115]

Despite Cantonment Jordon's location 100 miles from Fort Owen, a good deal of trade was carried on between the two. Supplies were continually obtained from Fort Owen throughout the severe winter.

On August 1, 1860, Mullan's party reached Fort Benton. Behind them lay a trail marked with the letters "MR" on prominent trees or stumps.[116] The construction of the military wagon road stretching a total of 633 miles was complete. As a military road, the route failed. Nevertheless, it became well worn by countless number of settlers, pack trains, and overland travelers, traversing it during the late 19th century.

Indian-White Relations

The earliest recorded contact between Indian and White in the Bitterroot Valley occurred when the Lewis and Clark party passed through the Valley in September, 1805. The expedition employed a Flathead guide and recorded favorable impressions of the tribe. Particular note was made of the Flathead's fine horses.[117] Prolonged contact between Flatheads and Anglos began with the establishment of the Jesuit Mission, St. Mary's, in 1841. Peaceful relations between Indians and whites continued even through the difficult transition following the Steven's Treaty.

This was emphatically not the case with the Blackfeet. The Blackfeet's main homelands ranged north and east of the Bitterroot Valley, yet they continually raided horses throughout western Montana, and threatened the lives of both Indian and white in the Bitterroot. Well after the Jesuits were ensconced in the Valley the Blackfeet continued their attacks. In part to thwart these raids, a second Mission complex was built in 1846. Constructed "on the prairie", a safe distance from the concealing underbrush of the riverbank, the new Mission was

surrounded by a stout pallisade and had two-story bastions in diagonal corners.[118]

In the fall of 1850, while the main body of Flatheads were east of the mountains on their semi-annual hunt, fifty old people and children were left in the care of the Mission. On September 12, a party of Blackfeet advanced on the fort-like Mission, terrifying the inhabitants. The object of the Blackfeet "raid", however, was horses. When the animals were released to them, the Blackfeet drove them off and departed. In the confusion, a Flathead youth was killed.[119]

The incident seemed to toll a death knell for the already troubled Mission. When the Jesuits sold the property two months later, Blackfeet harassment was cited as a deciding factor in their decision to leave the Bitterroot Valley.[120]

Blackfeet attacks continued after John Owen's ownership of the Mission was established. On September 12, 1852, Blackfeet raiders broke into the Fort corral and stole a number of horses. John Dodson, a young man recently employed at the Fort, recorded in his diary:

> Mr. Owen had four horses stolen last night by the black feet indians I suppose as they commit great depredations on the whites at this fort. [121]

In an even bolder attack four days later, Blackfeet killed and scalped Dodson while he was putting up hay within site of Fort Owen.[122]

The threat of Blackfeet attack upon the persons and property of Fort Owen had become so severe by 1853 that Owen and his brother, Frank, packed the post goods and abandoned the Fort. On their way out of the Bitterroot Valley, the Owens encountered a military pack train en route from the Columbia River with supplies for the Isaac Stevens party. Under protection of the pack train, the Owen brothers returned to the Bitterroot.[123]

A year later, however, Owen still felt threatened by the Blackfeet. When camped in the Hell Gate Ronde in July, 1854, Owen recorded in his journal:

> ....let my animals run loose to Night I think it Safe from the fact of the Flatheads being camped above and below Me

Owen recorded "second thoughts" a day later:

> ...The horse guard returned after an hours or two's hunt Without them My Suspicions were aroused I began to think My indulgence had proved fatal for the Safty of the animals The Blackfeet May have during the Night Entered the Camp and run them off...[124]

In the fall of 1855, territorial governor Isaac Stevens negotiated an inter-tribal peace treaty with the Blackfeet and many of the other western tribes. Owen, who attended the council, no doubt was encouraged at the prospect of an end to the fear and violence of Blackfeet raids. In May of 1856, Owen recorded in his journal:

> May 1..... Three Blackfeet Lodges arrived...The Flat Heads have recd them with Every demonstration of friendship so we see a little good already resulting from the Council held last Summer & it is to be hoped that it will continue These are the first (peaceable) Blackfoot I have Ever Seen in the Valley.... 125

Bitterroot Valley residents again felt the threat of violence during the Yakima and Cayuse hostilities, 1857 - 1858, and during the Nez Perce flight through the Valley in 1878, but no real outbreaks would again occur. As the number of white settlers in the area increased in the 1860's, the possibility of native resistence became increasingly remote. Fort Owen's importance centered on the quality of flour its mill ground rather than the safety of its walls and bastions.

The Flathead Treaty of 1855

Steven's interest in ascertaining the disposition of the native inhabitants had a very specific purpose: he hoped to negotiate treaties and land cessions with as many as possible of the tribes living east of the Cascade Mountains. In 1854, Stevens wrote:

> There is much valuable land and an inexhaustible supply of timber east of the Cascades. I consider its speedy settlement so desirable that all impediments should be removed.....There is a population of about

> 6,000 Indians in about twelve different tribes east of the Cascades....The amount that will be required to negotiate treaties with these Indians will not be less than $13,000. 126

Having completed treaty negotiations with the Indian tribes west of the Cascade Mountains in 1854, Stevens journeyed east in 1855 to meet with the tribes residing in the eastern district of his immense territory. In late May the Stevens party met with the Nez Perce, Umatillas, Cayuses, Walla Wallas, and Yakimas. After a difficult council, in which he ultimately prevailed, Stevens moved on to the Pend d'Oreilles, Flatheads, and Kutenais. The council commenced on July 7, 1855, at a site in the Hell Gate Ronde near the confluence of the Bitterroot and Clark Fork Rivers; a site since known as Council Grove.[127]

Governor Stevens' treaty policy followed the mode of the United States Government Indian removal policy established in the early 19th century; cession of aboriginal lands, placement on a reservation, and payment for land in annual shipments of goods.[128]

An estimated 450 Flatheads, 350 Kutenais, and 600 Pend d'Oreilles met with the Stevens commission. Although the tribes had long maintained distinct lands, languages, and identities, Stevens proposed that they all be confederated on one reservation under the collective name of the Flathead Nation. Stevens further suggested that Flathead chief Victor (a Catholic neophyte) be recognized as their supreme chief.

The native delegations were then asked to state their preference regarding the location of their reservation: the Bitterroot Valley, indigenous home of the Flatheads, or the lower Flathead Valley, hunting land of the Pend d'Oreille and Kutenai. The Flatheads adamantly stated their preferance in the Bitterroot site while the Kutenai and Pend d'Oreille preferred the northern site, also the location of the Jesuit Mission.

All parties finally agreed that an official governmental investigation should be conducted to determine the best location for the reservation and

that all three tribes would abide with that decision. Until such a survey could be completed, the Flathead would remain in the Bitterroot Valley and the Pend d'oreilles and Kutenais would remain in the Flathead Valley.

Following completion of negotiations at Hell Gate, the Stevens party, joined by John Owen, journeyed on to meet with the Blackfeet. This treaty also included an inter-tribal peace agreement between the Bloods, Blackfeet, Piegans, Gros Ventres, Nez Perces, Flatheads, Snakes, and one Cree.[129]

Flathead Agency

Pursuant to the survey clause in the treaty negotiated with the Flathead at Council Grove, Stevens ordered commission member Dr. Richard Lansdale to investigate the two proposed reservation sites. Lansdale decided in favor of the Flathead Valley, partly because of the presence there of the Jesuit Mission:

> Men may and do differ in opinion as to the results of the teachings of the Fathers upon the Indians; my own decided opinion is in favor of their example and institutions, as greatly beneficial to the Flatheads.[130]

In November, 1855, Lansdale was appointed as the first agent to the Confederated Tribes (Flatheads, Kutenais, and Pend d'Oreilles). Upon receiving the commission, Lansdale moved to the Flathead Valley and constructed an agency consisting of four sod-roofed log buildings near the junction of the Jocko and Flathead Rivers. On December 2, he purchased various building materials from Fort Owen, undoubtably for use in erecting the agency.[131]

The following spring, 1856, Lansdale returned to Olympia, Washington, and John Owen was appointed "special agent" for the Flathead Nation. Lansdale returned briefly in 1857; upon his departure Owen once again became agent and held the position until July, 1862.[132]

Owen remained at the Fort, carrying his own personal affairs as well as those of the Flathead.

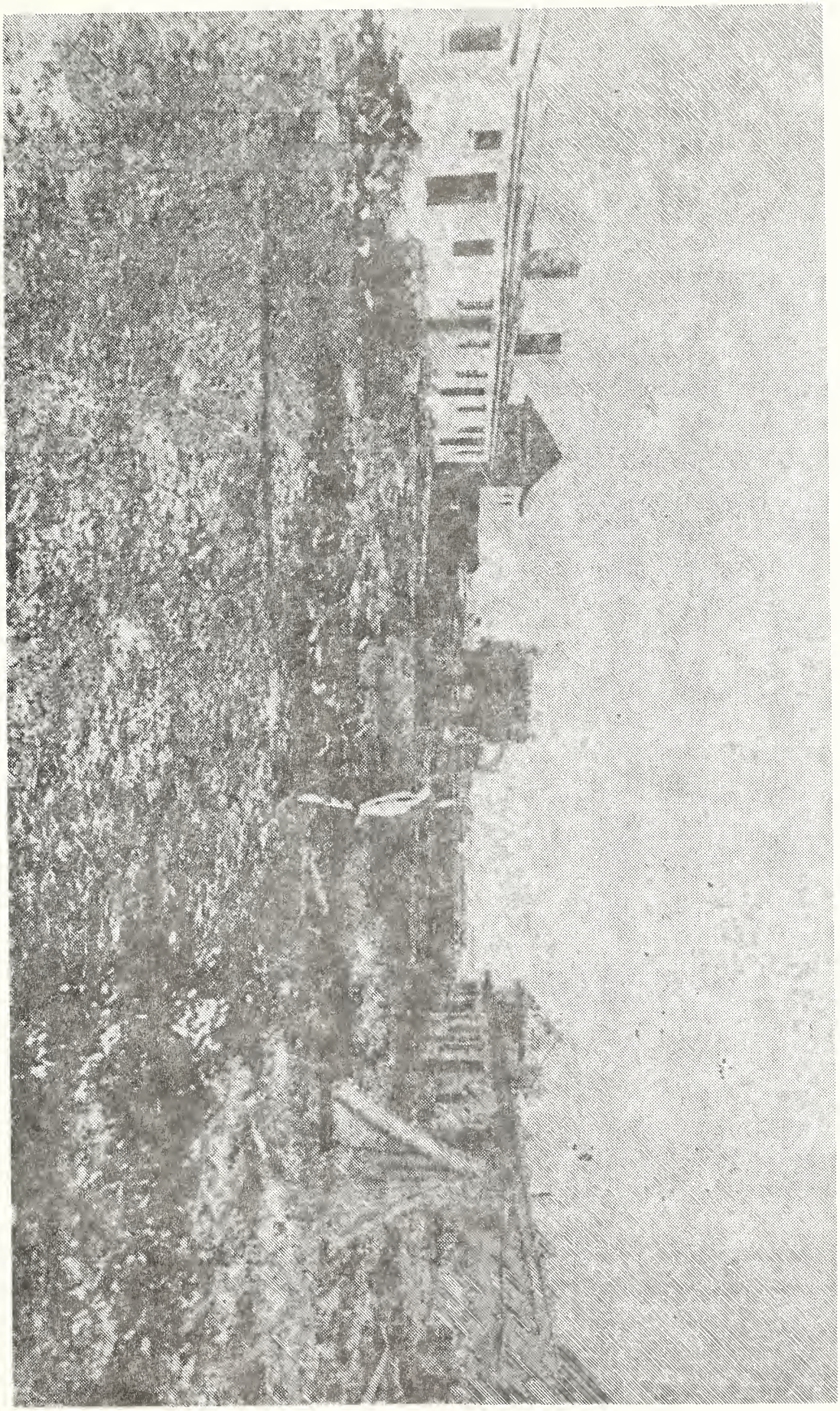


Figure 2.11: Washington J. McCormick in courtyard at Fort Owen
Source: Montana Historical Society

FOOTNOTES

[1] Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, The Journals of Lewis and Clark, ed., Bernard DeVoto (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 15.

[2] Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, Montana: A History of Two Centuries (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 1976), p. 27.

[3] W. J. Ghent, The Road to Oregon: A Chronicle of the Great Emigrant Trail (London, New York, Toronto: Longrams, Green, and Co., 1929), pp. 7-8.

[4] Ibid., p. 8.

[5] Ibid., p. 50.

[6] Ibid., p. 71.

[7] Raymond W. Settle, ed., The March of the Mounted Riflemen (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1940), p. 13.

[8] Ibid., pp. 13-16.

[9] Quoted in Ghent, The Road to Oregon, p. 164.

[10] Ibid., p. 193.

[11] Paul C. Phillips, The Fur Trade (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), Vol. 2, p. 549.

[12] George F. Weisel, Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Journal (Missoula: Montana State University Press, 1955), p. XXVII.

[13]Ibid., pp. XXVII - XXVIII, 144, 146.

[14]Malone and Roeder, Montana: A History, p. 48.

[15]Father Pierre Jean DeSmet, S.J., Letters and Sketches (Philadelphia: M. Fithian, 1843), pp. 62-63.

[16]Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis A History of the Bitterroot Valley (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1971), p. 49.

[17]John Owen, The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen Pioneer of the Northwest 1850-1871 (Two Volumes) ed. Seymour Dunbar and Paul C. Phillips (New York: Edward Eberstadt, 1927), p. 5.

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[19]Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[20]Ibid., p. 7.

[21]Ibid., p. 7.

[22]Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, p. 60. Frank J. Woody, "A Sketch of the Early History of Western Montana," Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana (Helena: State Publishing Co., 1896), Vol. II, p. 92.

[23]Owen, Journals, I, p. 7. Woody, "A Sketch of the Early History," pp. 91-92. Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, p. 60. Weisel, Men and Trade, pp. 39-41.

[24]Settle, The March of the Mounted Riflemen, pp. 13-15.

[25]Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[26]Woody, "A Sketch of the Early History," p. 91.

[27]Everett Dick, Vanguards of the Frontier (New York, London: D. Appelton Co. Inc., 1941), pp. 81-82.

[28]Ghent, The Road to Oregon, pp. 133-134.

[29]Ibid., p. 134.

[30]Settle, The March of the Mounted Riflemen, pp. 170-171.

[31]Weisel, Men and Trade, p. XXI.

[32]Owen, Journals, I, p. 188.

[33]Ibid., p. 11.

[34]Weisel, Men and Trade, p. 80.

[35]Jennie Boughton Brown, Fort Hall on the Oregon Trail (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printer, Ltd., 1932), p. 321.

[36]Phillips, The Fur Trade, II, p. 551.

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[38]Ghent, The Road To Oregon, p. 28.

[39]Father Gregory Mengarini, S.J., "Mengarini's Narrative of the Rockies, Memoirs of Old Oregon, 1841-1850, and St. Mary's Mission," ed. Albert J. Partoll, published in Frontier Omnibus, ed. John W. Hakola (Missoula: Montana State University Press, 1962). p. 159.

[40]Weisel, Men and Trade, p. XXI.

[41]Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, p. 72.

[42]Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[43]Quoted in John Fahey, The Flathead Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), p. 106.

[44]Ibid., p. 111.

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[51]Ibid., p. 19.

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[55]Ibid., p. XXX. Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, pp. 76-77.

[56]Montana Historical Society, Manuscript Collection No. 44. Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, pp. 77-78. Owen, Journals, I, p. 16.

[57]Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, p. 65.

[58]Weisel, Men and Trade, pp. XXIII-XXX.

[59]Owen, Journals, II, p. 30.

[60]Ibid., p. 1.

[61]Montana Historical Society, Manuscript Collection No. 44, Journal 2.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Weisel, Men and Trade, p. 239.

[64]Owen, Journals, I, pp. 44-48.

[65]Ibid., p. 325.

[66]Owen, Journals, II, p. 120.

[67]----, Journals, I, p. 129.

[68]Ibid., p. 130.

[69]Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[70]Owen, Journals, II, pp. 31-32.

[71]Ibid.

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[73]Ibid.

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[75]Ibid., p. 103.

[76]Owen, Journals, I, p. 67.

[77]Ibid., p. 43.

[78]Ibid., p. 44.

[79]Ibid., pp. 43-45.

[80]Ibid., p. 159.

[81]Ibid., p. 160.

[82]Ibid., p. 161.

[83]Ibid., p. 164.

[84]Ibid., p. 177

[85]Ibid., p. 288.

[86]Ibid., p. 290.

[87]Ibid., pp. 295-296.

[88]Ibid., p. 317.

[89]Owen, Journals, I, p. 317.

[90]Ibid., pp. 322-346. ----, Journals, II, pp. 2-3.

[91]Owen, Journals, I, p. 343.

[92]----, Journals, II, pp. 3-4.

[93]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[94]Montana Historical Society, Manuscript Collection No. 37, Box 1, Folder 30.

[95]Owen, Journals, II, p. 3.

[96]Quoted in Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, p. 77.

[97]Owen, Journals, II, p. 29.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Quoted in Weisel, Men and Trade, p. 247.

[100]Weisel, Men and Trade, pp. 247-249.

[101]Owen, Journals, I, p. 114.

[102]Ibid., p. 152.

[103]Ibid., p. 228.

[104]Ibid., p. 65.

[105]Ibid., p. 337.

[106]Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, pp. 64-65.

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[109]Ibid., p. 188

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[113]John C. Ewers, Gustavas Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'Oreille Indians, 1854, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1948), Vol. 110, No. 7, pp. 1-13.

[114]Owen, Journals, I, p. 65.

[115]Captain John Mullan, Report On the Construction of A Military Road From Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1863), p. 47.

[116]In this case, "MR" stands for Military Road and not for Mullan's Road. Stevensville Historical Society, Montana Genesis, p. 240.

[117]Fahey, Flathead Indians, pp. 25-26.

[118]Lucylle H. Evans, Good Samaritan of the Northwest, Anthony Ravalli, S.J., 1812-1884 (Stevensville, Montana: Montana Creative Consultants, 1981), p. 72.

[119]Ibid., pp. 101-103

[120]Woody, "A Sketch of the Early History," p. 91.

[121]Quoted in Weisel, Men and Trade, p. 58.

[122]Weisel, Men and Trade, p. 58. Owen, Journals, I, p. 48.

[123]Fahey, Flathead Indians, pp. 89-90.

[124]Owen, Journals, I, p. 68.

[125]Ibid., p. 123.

[126]Fahey, Flathead Indians, p. 91.

[127]Ibid., pp. 92-93.

[128]Ibid., p. 92.

[129]Ibid., p. 101.

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[131]Ibid., p. 113.

[132]Fahey, Flathead Indians, p. 106. Owen, Journals, II, pp. 276-277.

Chapter Three

HISTORIC STRUCTURES ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 3

HISTORIC STRUCTURES ANALYSIS

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Jesuit Construction

When John Owen negotiated the purchase of the Church improvements at St. Mary's Mission in November, 1850, he acquired a pallisaded compound well-adapted to the unpredictable nature of the often hostile Blackfeet Indians. This compound was the second church built by the Jesuit Missionaries. Constructed during the summer, 1846, it replaced the Jesuit's first chapel on the banks of the Bitterroot River.[1] A drawing of the 1846 compound was executed by St. Louis artist Mathew Hastings based on a verbal description given him by Father DeSmet.[2] The illustration depicts a log church structure flanked, on either side, by smaller log structures. A pallisade fortification surrounds the structure with two two-storey bastions at diagonal corners.[3]

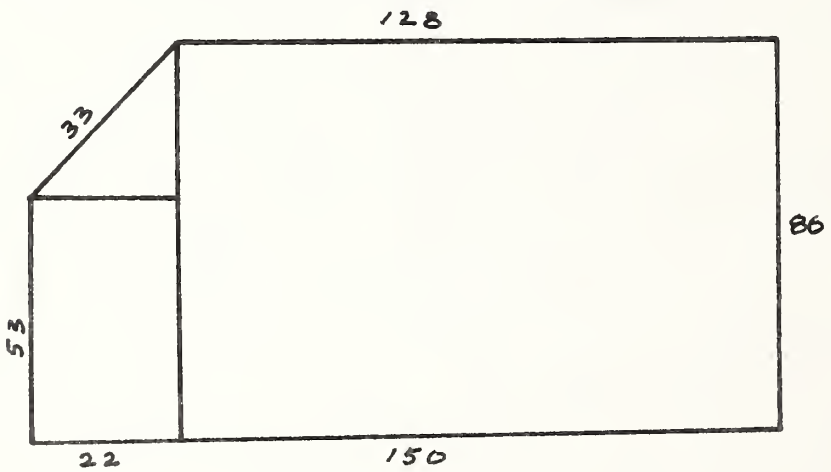
Although the specific course of events is largely speculative, it appears that when John Owen took over the Mission improvements in 1850, he simply adapted the existing structures for use as a trading post. Owen's agreement with the Fathers had stated that the property and structures would revert to the Church if the Jesuits returned before January 1, 1852. No record exists describing any structural modifications or new construction within the old Mission compound prior to this date.

Early Construction

After Owen's ownership of the Mission property was secured on January 1, 1852, he immediately set about building fences and gathering materials for new construction. On April 8, 1852, the Fort Owen Journal reveals the beginning of the new Fort with the simple entry:

"fencing adobe yard."[4] Adobe brick manufacture continued during the spring and summer of that year. On May 22, the Journal states, "Building wall," but, unfortunately, does not specify whether this was a perimeter wall or a wall of a new structure within the compound. Journal entries from early autumn, 1852, tend to support the latter interpretation. On September 30, the Journal states: "Building chimney."[5] Roof work commenced on October 12 and on October 21, the Journal noted, "making floors."[6]

A rough sketch appears on the inside of the 1852 Fort Owen Journal which may indicate the size of the Fort during this construction phase. The sketch (heretofore unpublished) is here reproduced:



Information regarding interior room arrangement or use within the Fort Owen compound is presently unknown. Some idea of the reaction of a visitor to the Fort might have had is revealed in the diary of young John Dodson:

> When we came here yesterday they gave us a room and I expected to find it something like living in but we went in and found it dirty as the ground and nothing to clean it with. I asked for a broom and they showed me a bunch of willows. [7]

On July 7, 1854, Gustav Sohon, a topographer with Lieutenant Mullan's party (then camped in the Valley), took a sketch of Fort

Owen.[8] This drawing, the earliest known rendering of Fort Owen, depicts a pallisaded compound with three interior structures. Sohon's sketch also shows sixteen log buildings outside of the Fort compound.

The Fort Is Rebuilt

The second phase of major construction at Fort Owen began in 1857 and culminated three years later with the completion of the adobe edifice generally associated with the Fort. The choice of adobe brick for the main structural medium of the Fort seems unusual in such a heavily timbered valley as the Bitterroot. Compared to log construction, though, adobe bricks presented a much cleaner, more refined finish. Additionally, in his travels through the West, Owen had ample opportunity to visit other adobe trading posts.

Fort Laramie, which Owen visited during the summer of 1849, was built of adobe brick, with a quadrangular plan. Bastions were built on the diagonal corners and a blockhouse was erected over the main gate.[9] Fort Hall, situated on the Snake River (near present Pocatello, Idaho) also was adobe. Like Fort Laramie, Fort Hall was built in a quadrangle with bastions. Owen spent the winter of 1849-1850 at and near Fort Hall.[10] Fort Walla Walla, a trading post where Owen did business in 1852, 1854, 1855, and 1857, also contained adobe buildings. Fort Walla Walla was surrounded by a pallisade stockade including two bastions.[11] Finally, Fort Benton, on the Missouri River was built of adobe bricks, and was said to be the finest and best built post of the American Fur Company.[12] John Owen visited Fort Benton in March and September, 1856, only a few months before construction began at Fort Owen.

Construction Begins

In April, 1857, John Owen began construction on the new Fort. On

April 27, he wrote in his journal:

> .....Silverthorn tearing down the Western flank row building -- I contracted with Tallman and Silverthorn for the Erection of two flank buildings, to be of adobe -- So our Summer's Work is before us. 13

In May, 1857, David Pattee began work on a sawmill to cut the lumber necessary to build the Fort. Owen explained in his jounral:

> .....a considerable quantity of lumber is requried for the fort and it is highly Necessary that is should be well Seasoned before using it Especially for Ceiling purposes. 14

Work continued on the West Barracks and wall through the summer of 1857. The building contained three rooms: kitchen, dining room (Owen refers to it as the "Mess.") and a large, general purpose room. This latter room has often been dubbed the "trade room," however, during its construciton, Owen calls it the "hall."[15] Traditionally, a hall was a multi-purpose room used for living, eating, working, and sleeping. In the context of Fort Owen, such a room would be very useful.

Constractors Tallman and Silverthorn stopped work on July 21 and John Owen began a series of journeys a few days later to the Jocko Agency, St. Ignatius Mission, Fort Benton, and Walla Walla. Owen spent only a few days at the Fort between these trips, but work on the Fort apparently continued. On Novermber 15, the day following his return from Walla Walla, Owen recorded "Moved into New Room," - ostensibly in the West Barracks.[16]

Work Continues

During the warm months of 1858, work apparently continued on the adobe fort, although only a few journal entries reference it. On September 18, Owen notes "running Saw Mill" and, on September 20,

"Sawing Lumber Making adobes."[17] Again, only a few entries were made in the Fort jounral in 1859; none of these reference construction work at the Fort. The 1860 journal, however, compares adobe manufacture during the summer to that of a year ago. Hence, it can be assumed that some work did take place during 1859.

Fort Owen is Completed

The 1860 season witnessed a great increase in building activity at Fort Owen. Although Owen was in Portland and Walla Walla for much of the summer, the Fort journal was maintained and notes almost daily reference to construction progress. The author of this journal has never been positively identified, however, internal evidence suggests that it was Owen's close associate and good friend, Henri M. Chase.

In May, 1860, work on the East Barracks was continued and the old office building was demolished.[18] In June, the South Gate and bastion foundations were laid. Wall foundations were completed in July, yet the adobe work was hindered by unusually rainy weather. On July 20, Chase recorded:

> I dreamed that my adobes were nothing but a puddle of mud, it was not quite that bad, but were somewhat injuried.... 19

A carpenter named Horton was hired in July and began work on door frames and window sashes. W.B.S. Higgins, another carpenter, began work in August, and progress on the Fort continued. On August 24, the journal noted "two men after Birch timber for fancy work," and, the next day, "painting E room."[20] The adobe walls, buildings, and bastions appear to have been completed by early autumn. Plastering and ceiling work was completed in late October.

Other structures inside the Fort compound were also begun in the autumn, 1860. On September 11, the Root House was started, with construction continuing through the end of the month. On October 15, Owen

noted, "Mr. Higgins putting up well house," and, on November 8, "Mr. Higgins laid foundations for Ice House."[21]

In February, 1861, Owen noted various finishing touches on the Fort. On the 4th, Higgins began shingling the Ice House - just in time for ice cutting. On the 8th, Owen recorded in his journal:

> Mr. Higgins to day finished a fine Writing desk for Me and put it in the office It is a beautiful piece of furniture - It reflects Much Cr on the builder. 22

On February 21, Owen recorded preparation for a party - perhaps to celebrate the completion of the Fort:

> In anticipation of a party to Morrow Evening We decorated the rooms with Engravings & Lithographs of the life & different characters of our Great Father. The immortal Washington. 23

After a full decade in the Bitterroot Valley, John Owen's Fort was complete.

Remodeling

During the summer of 1864, Major Owen had the interior and exterior walls of the Fort whitewashed. He was apparently pleased with the new look the whitewash gave the Fort and declared: "Fort looks better."[24]

In the autumn of 1866, Owen decided that "the Whole Establishment Wants Over hauling" and hired John Silverthorne to work on the Fort. The north wall had fallen down during the previous winter due to water erosion and Silverthorne's first project was to rebuild it.[25] When this was completed he set about installing a new capping on the Fort walls and a wash board around the base. To further prevent water damage, Owen had a culvert dug along the western side of the Fort.[26]

Silverthrone also rebuilt the wall and chimney in "Chatfield's room" (location in Fort not known) and tore down an old wooden structure on the Fort's western flank.[27] When Silverthorne finished this work, he extensively remodeled the Ice House with a new floor, interior walls, and sawdust insullation. Upon completion, Owen commented, "I feel proud of My

Ice house. I trust Ice will Keep Well in it." Other work included whitewashing the walls of the Mess room.[28]

John Owen also improved the fuel efficiency of the Fort during this remodeling. In October, 1866, he purchased a Box Stove for which he paid 1250 pounds of flour--the equivalent of $187.50.[29] On November 8, Owen noted that he "Rec'd Cooking Stove from Mr. Connally for which I am to pay him $140 in flour delivered at Gold Creek @ $15.00 pr 100#."[30]

Although other changes and modifications at the Fort undoubtably took place during the tenure of Owen and his sucessors, no further record is known. The deterioration of the adobe brick noted in 1865 continued to errode the Fort walls and structures through the late 19th and 20th centuries. Finally, in circa 1957, the only remaining structure, the East Barracks, was rebuilt with the more stable portland cement blocks existing today.

EXISTING STRUCTURES REPORT

Site Description

The existing site is a fenced one-acre area located north and west of Stevensville about one-half mile off the paved road to Stevensville from Highway 93. The site is located next to the existing ranch structures and is surrounded by the ranch's irrigated hay and pasture fields. A gravel road from the paved road to Stevensville accesses the site. The road is shared with the ranchers. A small parking area is located on the east side of the site near the main entrance.

The fenced area (see Figure 3.1) is the property line of the site. Within the fenced area are a number of structures relating and non-relating to the Fort.

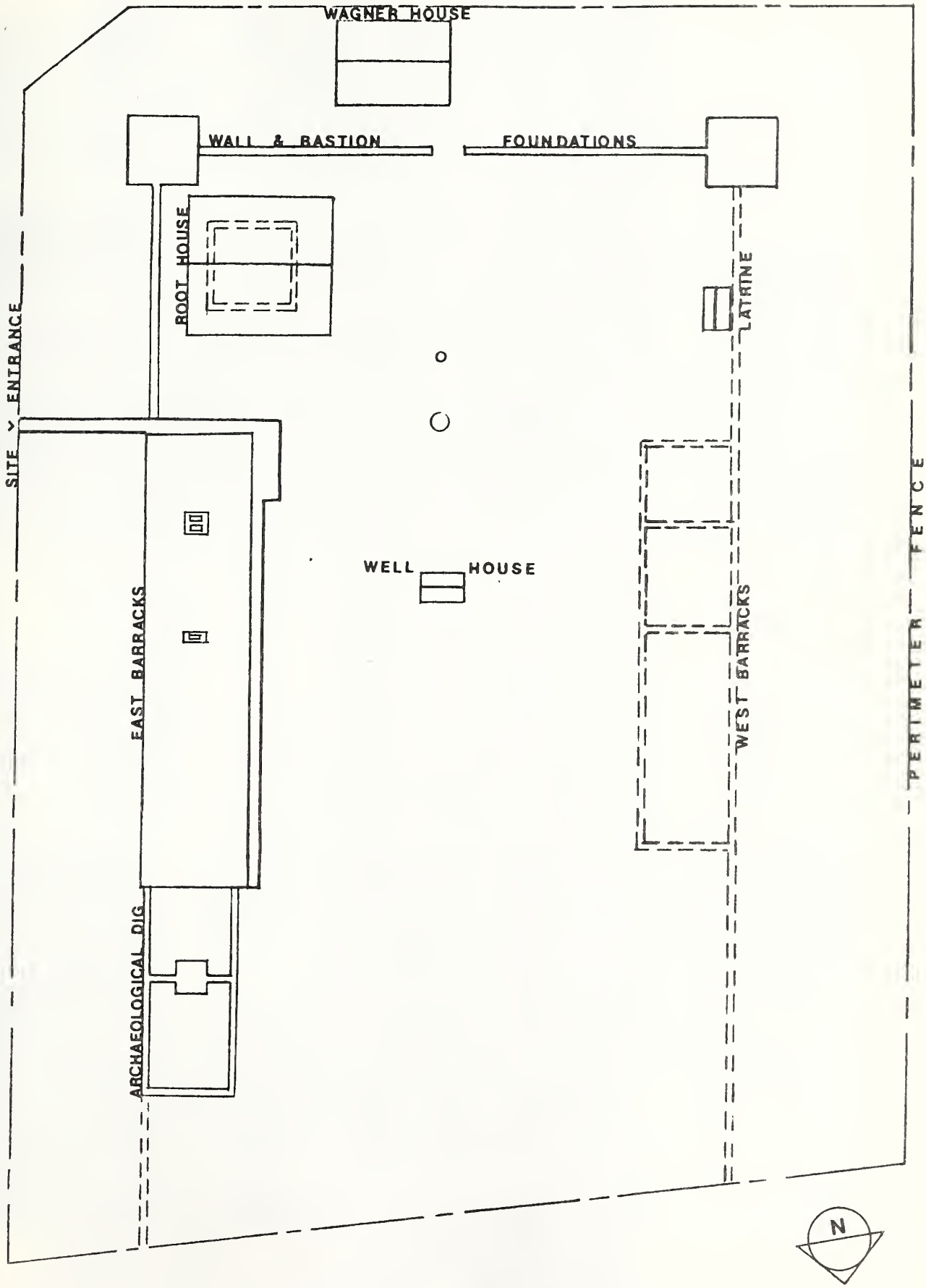
The main structure is the East Barracks, which has some of its original adobe walls. The doors face the interior yard of the Fort. A boardwalk runs along the front of the structure. It has been

reconstructed and restored in certain areas. The rest of the Fort has deteriorated over the years and has been removed. A historical archaeology class from the University of Montana has excavated most of the original wall foundations and has left some of them exposed. The walls, bastions, and West Barracks have been outlined in plan with logs.

A reconstructed wellhouse and outhouse have been put back in the Fort. The outhouse has been fitted with a chemical toilet for visitor use. A flagpost has been placed in the center of the Fort.

To the north of the East Barracks is an archaeological dig that has been left exposed revealing two additional rooms or buildings. To the south of the East Barracks, the root cellar foundation had been excavated and left exposed. A gable wood shingle roof has been built over the excavation to protect it from the weather.

Just to the south of the south wall foundation is a log cabin set on blocks that does not relate to the site.



FORT OWEN STATE MONUMENT « « » » EXISTING SITE PLAN

Figure 3.2: Looking southeast at the one-acre site of Fort Owen. The East Barracks has retained much of its historical integrity. All of the other structures have been brought to the site or reconstructed on the site.

Figure 3.3: Looking southeast across the actual Fort site. The logs depict the line of the adobe walls. The West Barracks is outlined in the foreground.

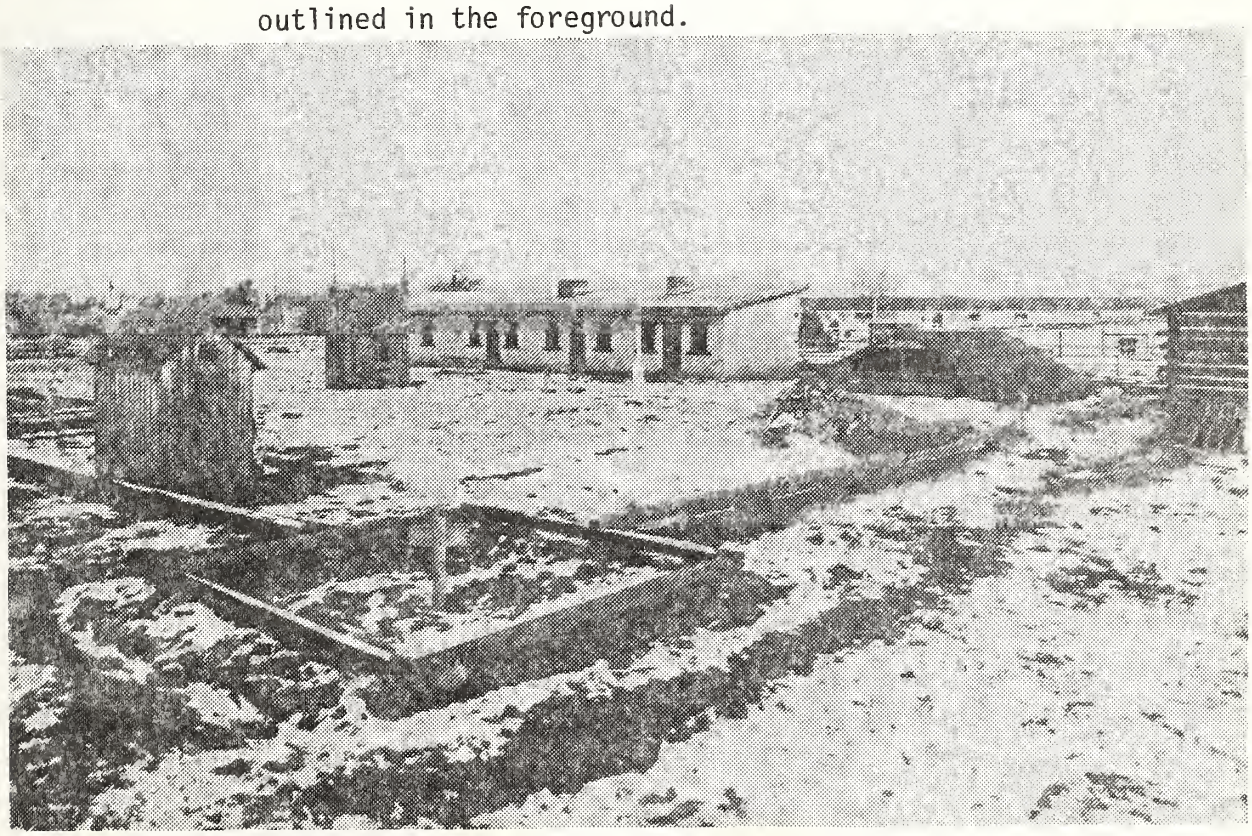


Figure 3.4: Looking northeast across the actual Fort site. The outline of the Southwest Bastion is in the foreground with the South Gate located to the right.

Building Descriptions

East Barracks

The East Barracks is a one-story adobe structure with a new board and batten wood roof. (See Figures 3.5 and 3.6.) The adobe on the west and south sides has been replaced with concrete block to imitate the adobe. The two chimneys are concrete block made to imitate adobe. The adobe walls are eighteen inches thick and support the roof. The structure sits on an eighteen inch rubble stone foundation laid up in a trench three feet deep.

There are newer wood paneled wood doors and double board doors on the south side. There are fixed wood windows which are not original as well. The boardwalk runs in front of the structure.

The builidng is in fair to good condition with the major problems taken care of--the lowering of the water table around the structure with the installation of a french drain to reduce rising damp in the walls, and a new roof to stop leaks. However, the adobe walls are in fair condition because of settlement and movement of the wall, which has caused some interior rocking and settlement. This problem seems to have stabilized, but should be monitored for changes.

The interior consists of four rooms, a dormitory room, Major Owen's guest room, his bedroom, and his office. They are described as follows: Dormitory Room (see Figures 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9): The dormitory room has adobe and concrete block walls with a 1 x 6 tongue and groove wood floor and rough wood ceilings. There is some original plaster on the east and south walls. The wood base doors and window sash are new, however most of the frames and ceiling beams are original. The frames on the west wall stick out into the room because of the single layer of concrete block. The room is in fair condition because of deterioration of the adobe walls.

Guest Room (see Figures 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12): The guest room is similar to the dormitory with the exception that all of the adobe walls

retain much of their original plaster. There is also a fireplace in this room that shares a chimney with the bedroom. Of all the rooms, this one has retained most of its original materials. The wood around the fireplace, the wood wainscot, some of the wood base, the wood cabinet, and the wood door and window frames are original. The floor is 1 x 6 wood tongue and groove and there is a rough board ceiling. The room is in fair condition because of some deterioration of materials over the years and movement of the east adobe walls that has caused some separation of walls and wood details.

Bedroom (see Figures 3.13, 3.14, and 3.15): The bedroom has been replastered with metal lathe and metal corner beads. There is a fireplace with original wood surround and an original wood cabinet with missing doors. With the exception of the doors and window frames most of the other materials have been replaced. This room is in fair to good condition with some deterioration of the original woodwork.

Study (see Figures 3.16, 3.17, and 3.18): This room is similar to the bedroom with the exception that there is a closet next to the fireplace instead of a cabinet. The closet retains its original wood-paneled door.

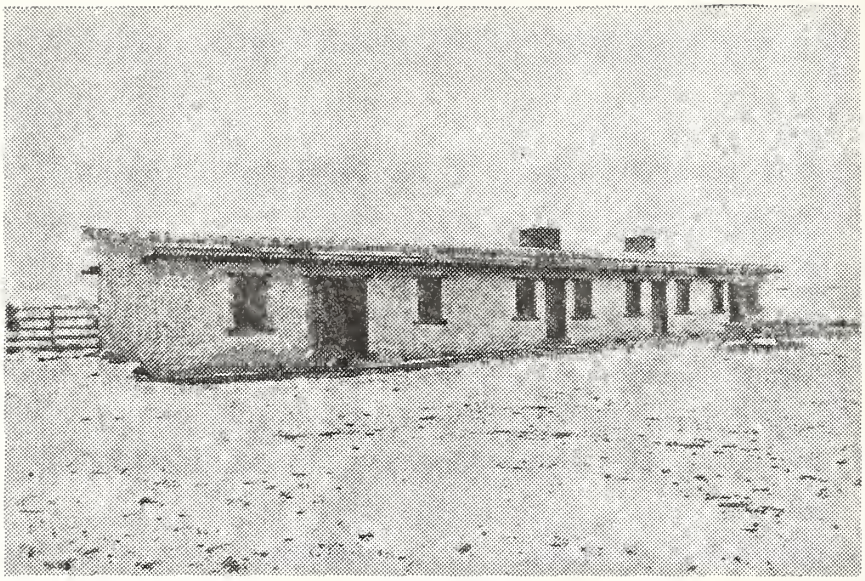


Figure 3.5: Looking southeast at the East Barracks.

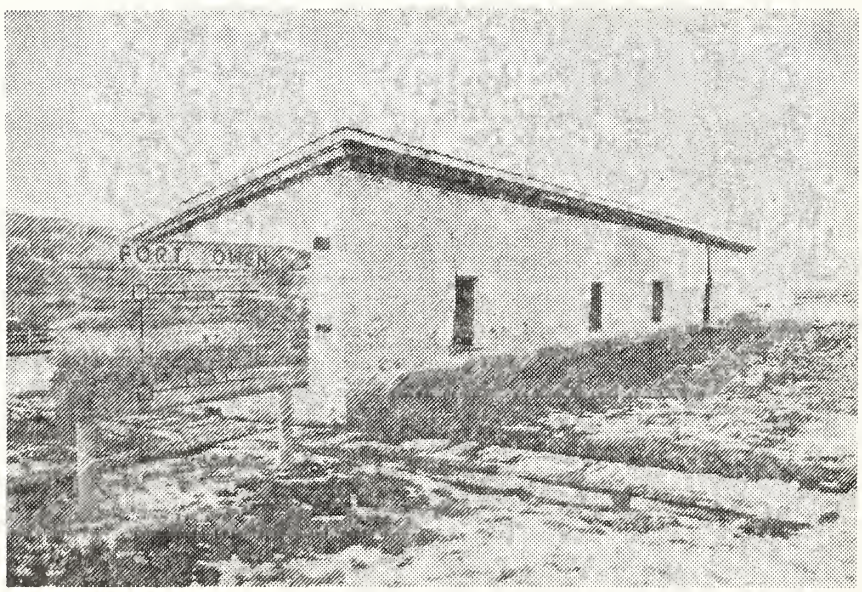


Figure 3.6: Looking northwest at the East Barracks. The entrance sign and boardwalk to the site are in the foreground.

Figure 3.7: Interior elevation of the west wall and entrance doors of the dormitory room. The wall is concrete block. The ceiling has new rough boards. The wall is only one layer thick at this point.

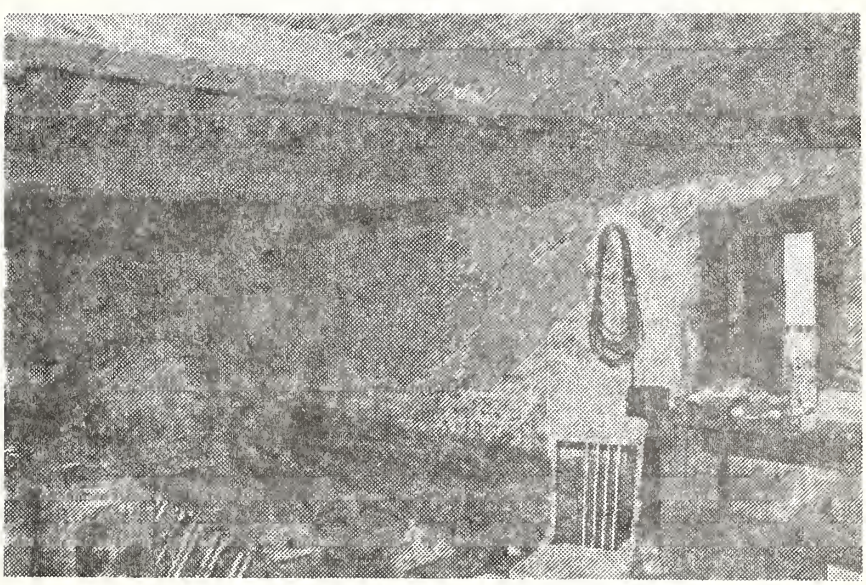


Figure 3.8: Interior elevation of the north and east walls of the dormitory room. The north wall is concrete block and the east wall has original adobe blocks. Part of the east wall has horsehair plaster and the rest is whitewashed.

Figure 3.9: Intersection of the south and west walls in the dormitory space. The west wall is concrete block. The south wall is adobe blocks with some plaster. Note leveling wood members in the center of the adobe wall.

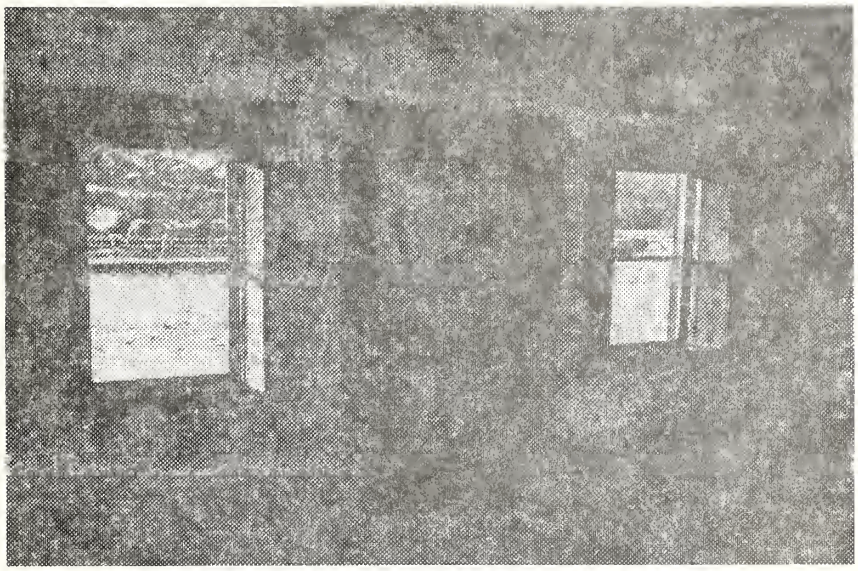


Figure 3.10: Interior elevation of the west wall of the Guest room. The wall consists of concrete block. The doors and windows are not original.

Figure 3.11: Interior elevation of the east and south walls of the Guest room. Both walls are adobe with plaster.

Figure 3.12: Interior elevation of the south wall of the Guest room. Note original plaster, mantel, wood surround, and wainscot with base. The ceiling wood is new.

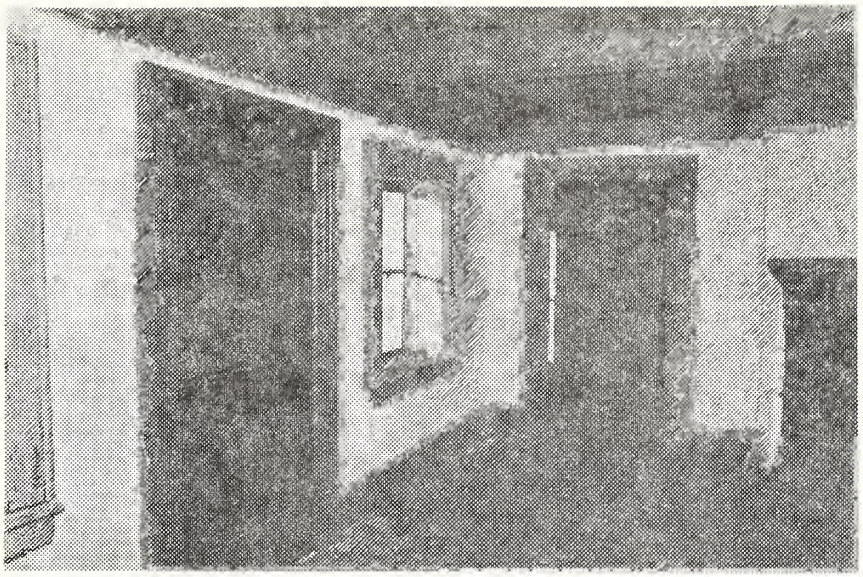


Figure 3.13: Interior elevation of the west wall and entrance to the Guest room in Major Owen's bedroom. The plaster, wood base, ceiling wood, and windows and doors are new.

Figure 3.14: Looking at the fireplace in Major Owen's bedroom. The wood mantel and surround are original. The adobe has been patched with dissimilar materials in the fireplace.

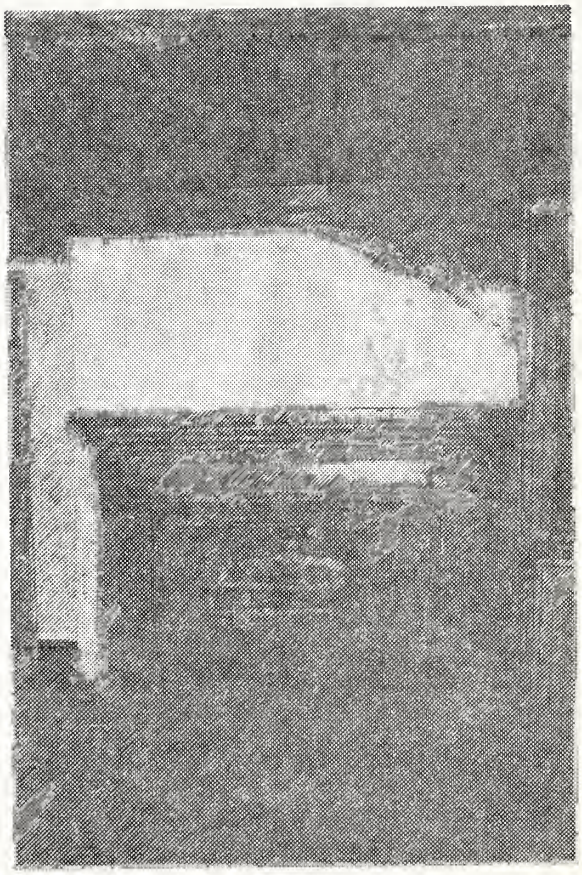


Figure 3.15: Interior elevation of parital north and east walls of the bedroom. Note the original cabinet next to the fireplace. All other wood has been replaced.

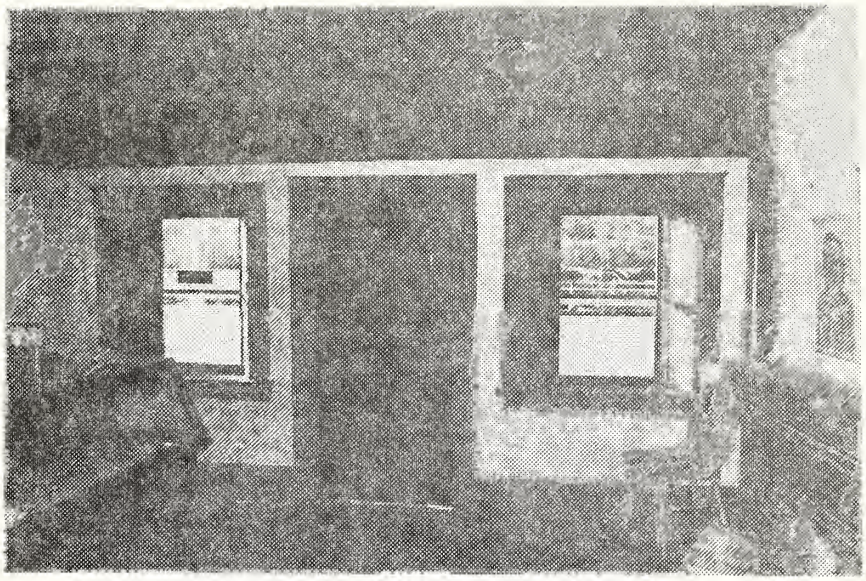


Figure 3.16: Interior west elevation of Major Owen's study. The doors and windows as well as the wood base and ceiling have been replaced.

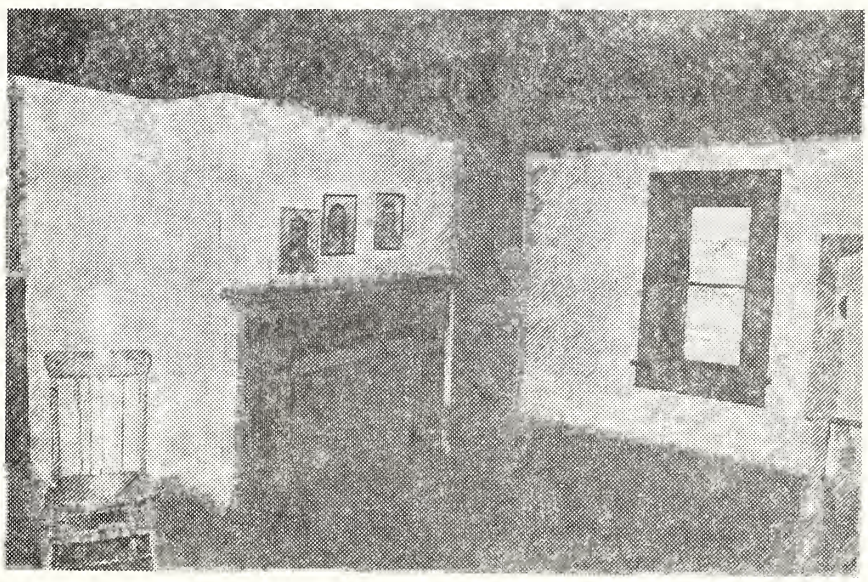


Figure 3.17: Interior elevation of partial north and east walls in Major Owen's study. Note the original wood around the fireplace, original wood base on the north wall, and original door on the closet. All other wood is new.

Figure 3.18: Interior elevation of the intersection of the west and north walls of Major Owen's study.

Reconstructed Structures

Wellhouse (see Figure 3.19): The wellhouse is wood frame board and batten with a pitched gable wood shingle roof. There is an opening on the north and south for access. The structure sits on a wood railroad tie foundation. The structure is in good condition.

Outhouse (see Figure 3.4): The outhouse is wood frame board and batten with a pitched gable wood shingle roof. There are two board and batten doors with one door fixed. A chemical toilet for visitor use is contained in the interior. The structure is in good condition.

Other Structures

Root Cellar Roof (see Figure 3.4): A new wood shingle gable roof has been placed over the root cellar to protect the excavation of the foundation. It is in good condition.

Cabin (see Figure 3.2): A log cabin with a board and batten roof, fixed windows and a board door sits on the south end of the fort. It has been redaubed with adobe and sits on a wood pier foundation. It is in good condition.

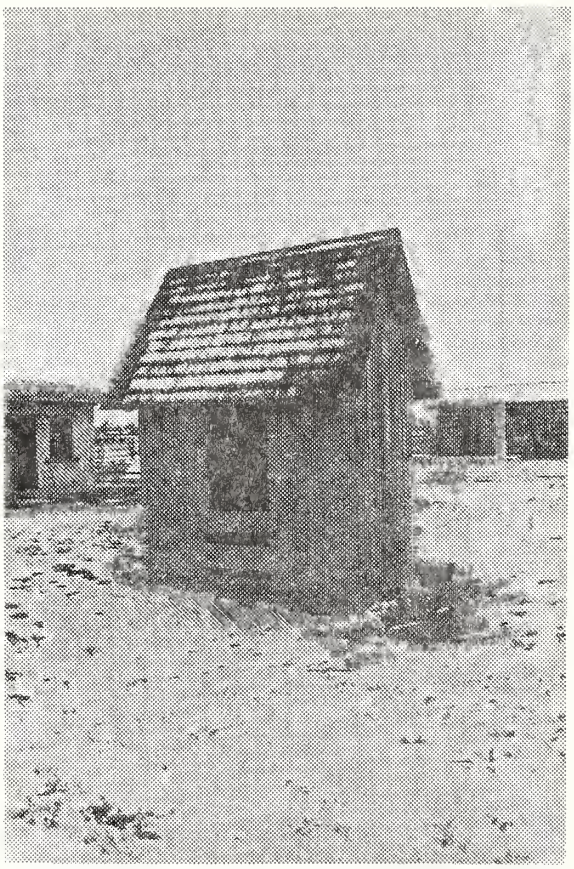


Figure 3.19: Looking southeast at the reconstructed wellhouse.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Lucylle H. Evans, Good Samaritan of the Northwest, Anthony Ravalli, S.J., 1812-1884 (Stevensville: Montana Creative Consultants, 1981), p. 82.

[2]Ibid., pp. 259-260.

[3]Ibid., p. 92.

[4]John Owen, The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen Pioneer of the Northwest 1850-1871 (Two Volumes) ed. Seymour Dunbar and Paul C. Phillips (New York: Edward Eberstadt, 1927), p. 44.

[5]Ibid., p. 49.

[6]Ibid.

[7]John F. Dodson, "The Diary of John F. Dodson: His Journey from Illinois to His Death at Fort Owen in 1852." Montana Magazine of Western History, ed. George F. Weisel, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 31

[8]Owen, Journals, I, p. 65.

[9]Raymond W. Settle, ed., The March of the Mounted Riflemen (Glendale: California: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1940), p. 98.

[10]George F. Weisel, Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger (Missoula, Montana: Montana State University Press, 1955), p. XXXVII.

[11]Ibid., p. XXXV.

[12]Ibid., p. XXXVIII.

[13]Owen, Journals, I, p. 162.

[14]Ibid., p. 164.

[15]Ibid., p. 172.

[16]Ibid., p. 183.

[17]Ibid., pp. 203-204

[18]Ibid., p. 215.

[19]Ibid., p. 219.

[20]Ibid., pp. 222-223.

[21]Ibid., p. 226.

[22]Ibid., p. 232.

[23]Ibid., p. 233.

[24]Ibid., p. 336.

[25]Owen, Journals, II, pp. 27, 32.

[26]Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[27]Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[28]Ibid., p. 30.

[29]Ibid., p. 33.

[30]Ibid., p. 37

Chapter Four

FORT OWEN INTERPRETIVE PLAN

CHAPTER 4

FORT OWEN INTERPRETIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Fort Owen as Resource

The Fort Owen State Monument site is a valuable cultural resource in view of the manner in which the history of the site documents a period of great transition in Montana's development. Founded as a Jesuit Mission for the Flathead Indians in 1841, the site represents the first white settlement in what is today Montana. Army sutler John Owen journeyed west on the Oregon Trail in 1849 and purchased the Jesuit improvements in 1850. During his first decade in the Bitterroot Valley, Major Owen was actively engaged in the fur trade with both Indians and whites and entertained at the Fort a range of personalities including Chiefs Victor and Alexander and Traders Richard Grant, Michael Ogden, and Angus MacDonald. This early period saw also the rebuilding of the Fort Owen walls and buildings and the development of an agricultural program on the acreage surrounding the Fort. In the late 1850's, Major Owen became deeply involved with the Flathead Indians during his capacity of Special Indian Agent.

The late 1850s and early 1860s witnessed another important step in the development of Montana. Railroad and military road surveys based their operations at Fort Owen and brought to the area such notable historical figures as Washington Governor Isaac Stevens, Lieutenant John Mullan, and Artist Gustuvas Sohon.

Gold discoveries brought tens of thousands of new settlers to Montana in the early 1860s. To accomodate the food needs of the mining camps the settlers created, agriculture in the western valleys increased rapidly. The Bitterroot Valley plays a significant role in this development. With the completion of a commercial grist mill in 1865, Fort

Owen became the hub of agriculture in the valley.

The 1870s ushered in a period of mature settlement with families, towns, and organized governments charting a course to a more tame, agrarian-based lifestyle. Fort Owen passed out of John Owen's ownership in 1872 and with it passed a colorful and significant chapter in Montana's rich history.

The following plan for the interpretive development of Fort Owen seeks to explore and illuminate the remarkable character of its proprietor, John Owen, as well as the cultural and physical changes of the Bitterroot Valley, the colorful personalities, and the historical events Fort Owen both witnessed and played host to.

Scope of Interpretive Plan

This interpretive plan presents options and makes recommendations for the interpretive development of Fort Owen. Of primary concern is the structural and archaeological remains of the Fort proper. Of secondary focus is the development of the parcel of land contiguous to the Fort on the south, comprising approximately 1.72 acres. The development of additional land, originally part of John Owen's "donation claim" but now in private ownership, will also be discussed, along with options for future development of buildings and programs.

A broad range of options, devices, and techniques traditionally employed in historical interpretation programs are presented and discussed. These include period restorations, interpretive exhibits, interpretive markers, guided tours, self-guided tours, living history, mechanical devices, brochures, maps, and other publications.

The primary interpretive focus recommended for the interpretation of Fort Owen is 1850 - 1873, the period in which John Owen was proprietor of the Fort. The period of 1873 to the present will also be addressed with specific reference to the archaeological investigations of Fort Owen. Historical themes pertaining to the Jesuit occupation

of the site (1841-1850) and their construction of the two Mission complexes (1841 and c. 1846) will be addressed in a manner that will reference the existence of the 1866 St. Mary's Mission, located one mile south of Fort Owen in the town of Stevensville. An interpretive plan for St. Mary's Mission is presently in preparation; it is recommended that the developers of the two sites acknowledge, in their interpretive presentations, the complementary historical aspects of Fort Owen and St. Mary's Mission.

This interpretive plan further acknowledges the presence of the Ravalli County Historical Museum in Hamilton, approximately twenty-seven miles south of Fort Owen. This museum presents a general history of the Bitterroot Valley using case exhibits, period rooms, and theme rooms as primary interpretive vehicles.

In summary, this report presents a basic interpretive program for Fort Owen State Monument by examining guidelines for interpretive planning, establishing objectives for the effective interpretation of the site, and by presenting recommendations for implementing a variety of interpretive tools to meet these guidelines and achieve these objectives. The report concludes with recommendations for future physical development at Fort Owen State Monument.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETIVE PLANNING

> "The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction but provocation."
>
> Freeman Tilden. [9]

Through the combined use of historical sites, structures, objects, events, and ideas, effective historical interpretation seeks to provide information in a manner that encourages exploration and query from the critical participant. The goal of all interpretation is to spark a greater understanding of the human element in the past and to clarify historical relationships and contexts. Interpretation, then, is a specialized form of communication that relates the human experience of the past to the human experience of the present.

To accurately and effectively interpret the history of a specific documentary site, such as Fort Owen, it is first necessary to examine the physical and material record of the site. It is further necessary to consider the nature and needs of the potential site visitors and also to consider program resource needs and requirements.

Physical Evidence

The physical and archaeological remains of Fort Owen reveal a framework upon which the interpretive program should be built. The original form of Fort Owen was that of an adobe brick enclosed compound. Two-Story bastions and a fortified gate dominated the south side and adobe brick structures for dwelling and work were built on the east and west sides. Other structures within the compound included a root house, wellhouse, ice house, and privy.

These features suggest questions which should be addressed by the interpretive plan. These include: why was the adobe used in constructing the Fort? why was an enclosed compound necessary? why were the bastions built on the south side? etc. A further investigation of room use and

layout in the east and west barracks suggest more questions about life at the Fort: why was there a special guest room? what kind of library did Owen have? who did the cooking and what kind of food was eaten at the Fort? how many men lived and worked at the Fort? what was the nature and extent of trade at the Fort? Exploration of the archaeological "digs" and restored sections of the east barracks will provide additional interpretive dictates regarding the twentieth century investigation and preservation of the Fort.

Historical Evidence

While the physical evidence within the site suggests a basic framework, this information must be analyzed critically to determine relative significance of the various physical components. Historical research reveals this relative significance thus enriching the texture and profile of the interpretive materials. Not only must the written record of life at Fort Owen be examined, but also the record of the world beyond the mountains surrounding the Bitterroot Valley.

Fort Owen is unusually rich in contemporary documentation. Journals and ledgers were maintained sporadically at Fort Owen for neary twenty years and they provide much detail and insight into the day-to-day workings and lifestyle enjoyed at the Fort. Owen well describes Christmas and New Year celebrations, visits from military officers, Jesuit missionaries, mountain men, Indian Chiefs, elegant dinners, and many other incidents that document the transition of the Fort from a far-flung fur trading post to a prosperous mill at the hub of a bustling agricultural village.

Audience

An analysis of the average age, education, and historical knowledge of visitors to Fort Owen will be helpful in planning an interpretive presentation that will maximize audience comprehension. While it is an old maxim that museums should gear their presentations to the fifth grade

level, it is better to create a program that can be understood and enjoyed at several levels of complexity.

Periodic visitor surveys should be conducted at Fort Owen, once the interpretive program has been implemented to monitor the changes in the visitor profile. A questionnaire might be helpful to analyze audience reaction to the interpretive program. Adjustments in the program can then be made as needed.

Resources

A careful examination of present and potential resources also is an important step in creating a viable interpretive plan for Fort Owen. Such back-up facilities as electricity, a well and septic system, parking, security, historical collections, personnel, and sources of funding have a direct bearing on the nature of the interpretive program.

It is best to create an interpretive program that can be implemented into the site as it presently exists. However, the program also should have enough flexibility to enable it to grow and develop as funding sources permit more extensive site development. For Fort Owen, this may mean that initial interpretive development concentrates on the existing structures and archaeological sites. With these resources as a foundation, interpretive statements can be enhanced through the use of historical objects, photographs, drawings, and other graphic materials.

Present and potential staffing levels also will influence the interpretive program. In addition to routine maintenance, staff may be required for educational tours, and special events. As an adjunct to Fish, Wildlife and Parks personnel, the Stevensville Historical Society should be considered as a potential source for site staffing.

Funding must also be considered. All development monies should be carefully analyzed in terms of cost-effectiveness. Development priorities should be based on the maximum interpretive potential per dollar. If necessary, phase development and employ visitor evaluation forms to monitor the continued effectiveness of each phase of development.

OBJECTIVES FOR INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT AT FORT OWEN

To implement the preceding guidelines in the Fort Owen Master Interpretive Plan, the following objectives have been established.

Site Integrity

To remove all unnecessary modern and intrusive elements from the site.

To make all necessary modern components sympathetic to the color, texture, and scale of the site's historic features.

To make a clear distinction between original and restored, reconstructed, and modern site fixtures.

To create a sense of wholeness and cohesiveness with all historic, modern, and interpretive components of the site.

Interpretive Content

To present and discuss the character of Fort proprietor, Major John Owen.

To present to the site visitor a mid-nineteenth century perspective of the Fort in terms of its physical presence -- "a haven in the wilderness" -- and in terms of its cultural presence -- as "an abstract expression of eastern 'civilization.'"

To explain the transition of the Fort from a fur trading post to a grist mill to a historic monument in terms of the growth and development of western Montana and the entire West.

To better understand life in the mid-nineteenth century American West by examining details of life at Fort Owen.

Implementation

To create an interpretive program that is flexible in that it can accomodate changes in agency funding and development priority.

To build an interpretive program that can be adapted to a variety of interpretive tools and methodologies.

To design an interpretive program that can be implemented in phases.

RECOMMENDED INTERPRETATIVE DEVICES FOR USE AT FORT OWEN

> "Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile."
>
> Freeman Tilden. [11]

To effectively communicate the history of Fort Owen in a stimulating and provocative manner, the following interpretive devices are presented for implementation. These methods maximize visitor involvement and comprehension through written, spoken, and mechanical communication.

Guided Tours

The guided tour instills and utilizes the human element to the greatest advantage in site interpretation. A knowledgeable guide can help visitors understand and enjoy a historic site beyond the reach of printed or recorded material. The individual can observe particular needs or interests of the visitor and respond accordingly.

Guided tours are perhaps the most flexible and effective way to interpret a site. Tours may be guided from a specific starting point to designated completion point. A second option calls for a stationed attendent who may interpret an area by such methods as an informal talk, a question-answer discussion, or demonstration of some activity appropriate to the theme. Guides are often identified by their clothing which may be a standard uniform or an appropriate period costume.

Where barriers are not installed, the tour guide presents an added security advantage. Guides are also extremely effective when working with large groups.

To become effective interpreters, tour guides must be thoroughly acquainted with the site history and interpretive techniques.

Living History

Tours can be enhanced by combining the effectiveness of a human interpreter with a demonstration of a process or activity. In these situations, the demonstrator becomes part of the setting, interpreting a theme clearly pertinent to the area. In some cases, the individual will assume an appropriate role of a historic character.

Some demonstrations may be continuous, with the interpreter interrupting his duties to speak with the visitors. Others may be occasional, seasonal, or simply brief explanations or demonstrations of a process.

Living history programs are excellent ways to actively involve the visitor with the site. Participation and demonstration are priceless ingredients for interpretation.

While inpressive, effective living history programs are grounded in extensive programs of research, artifact collection, maintenance, and training.

Self-Guided Tours

The self-guided tour allows each visitor the maximum amount of freedom to explore a site. He can proceed at his own pace as dictated by his personal interests and constraints. Recommended programs include a site guide designating routes along designated pathways. These, in addition, may be supplemented by mechanical devices and interpretive markers or labels.

Publications

A variety of publications ranging from folded leaflets to bound books are available at various historic sites. Each is intended for a specific purpose to obtain the greatest benefit from the site.

The brochure or leaflet may be successfully used as an introductory document which will orient the visitor to the history and significance of the site. It can also serve as a promotional brochure and as a souvenir for visitors.

Booklets, on the other hand, are primarily educational rather than promotional. They contain additional information which supports that which the visitor has gained through site interpretation.

Guidebooks generally substitute for the human interpreter. The visitor learns the most effective route through the site in addition to detailed information which allows him to examine the site more closely than otherwise possible without a guide.

A catalogue identifies further the objects on exhibit including the history, use, materials, and measurements of each.

Mechanical Interpretation

Mechanical devices can be used both in lieu of and in addition to the interpreter. Audio devices take two forms - portable, which are those the visitor may carry with him, and stationary, including both push button and plug-in devices. Tapes can be employed to provide explanations of objects, rooms, or places without human interpreters, and to provide appropriate background sounds or music which complement the interpretation.

The combination of sound and visual images creates a stronger impression than audio alone. Films, slides, and multi-media presentations, though costly, can handle demonstrations beyond the capabilities of the human interpreter.

With the convenience of any mechanical interpretation comes the shortcomings. Disadvantages are largely monetary in that initial investment, replacement and maintenance are costly. These costs, however, can be amortized by charging the visitor a nominal use-fee.

Mechanical forms of interpretation such as slide/tape programs or specialized films are effective in orienting the visitor to the site. They

work well as supplemental forms of interpretation at various site points.

Because installation of electrical service at the Visitor Center and throughout the East Barracks is necessary, either stationary or portable mechanical devices may be used here. Stationary devices may be used throughout the remainder of the site as long as it does not endanger archaeological evidence at the site.

Exhibits

Modular exhibits offer substantial interpretive benefits. Installed at the Visitor Center, they can orient the visitor to the site before he starts on a guided or self-guided tour. Installed within the site, exhibits provide an extension of the tour.

Artifacts can be used to attract attention, stimulate a particular line of thought, transmit specific information, demonstrate a conclusion, arouse feelings, or any combination of the above. In addition, maps, photos, illustrations, documents, models, and labels can be used to support the interpretive theme. These items become an interpretive voice for the visitor.

Modular exhibits containing both two and three dimensional materials are recommended at Fort Owen in both the Visitor Center and within the East Barracks.

Interpretive Markers, Labels

The interpretive marker informs, explains and directs. The illustrated and written work must first of all be readable, and secondly legible. Each aspect of the written word affects its presentation. Its appearance should be in harmony with the setting: in overall design, placement, and amount.

Interpretive markers are most effective when used in conjunction with other devices.

INTERPRETIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The historical significance of the Fort Owen State Monument has long been recognized, yet the site has never realized its interpretive potential. Historical structures have been allowed to deteriorate, Exhibits have lacked historical cogency, presentational cohesiveness, and have been poorly maintained. Structures unrelated to the history and significance of Fort Owen have been moved to the site. Program planning and implementation have received little attention. This lack of organized planning and general neglect necessitates a complete restructuring of the Fort Owen site in terms of its physical layout, interpretive presentation, program plan, and the administrative structures needed to maintain, support, and direct these developments.

The following interpretive recommendations address these needs in a series of developmental phases. Phase I represents the minimum degree of physical and interpretive improvement necessary to adequately interpret the history and significance of the Fort Owen site. More extensive developmental options are presented to be considered for long-range site planning. Each of these options presumes the initial implementation of Phase I recommendations.

PHASE I - DEVELOPING AN INTERPRETIVE FOUNDATION

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Acquisition of Additional Land

The acreage at Fort Owen State Monument presently owned by the State of Montana embraces little more than the structural and archaeological remains of the Fort compound. This acreage is insufficient to adequately interpret the history and significance of the site. Thorough visitor orientation and entrance to the compound through the historic South Gate

is not presently possible. Nor does the Fort Owen site presently have a visitor parking facility that does not intrude upon the historical integrity of the site.

To remedy these constraints now imposed upon the interpretive development of the site, it is recommended that additional land be acquired as soon as it is feasible. The proposed acquisition of 1.72 acreas immediately south of the present State holdings is advised as the minimum acreage necessary to develop a sound interpretive program at Fort Owen. The chief use recommended for this additional land is visitor parking and site orientation. The following recommendations are essentially in keeping with those proposed by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in July, 1981.

Relocation of the Wagner House

In its present location, the Wagner House physically blocks the main historic entrance (South Gate) to Fort Owen, and in no way contributes to a better understanding of the site. It is therefore recommended that the structure be relocated to the visitor orientation area and adapted for use as a visitor center. As such, the Wagner House should include:

1. Toilet facilities and a drinking fountain with access provided for handicapped visitors.
2. A First Aid station and emergency telephone.
3. A reception area with an information and sales counter.
4. Space for modular exhibits presenting site orientation materials. (Including a rear-screen projection unit for slide/tape programs)

The Wagner House visitor center should be used also as a distribution center for brochures, maps, site guides, and other printed materials concerning Fort Owen and other DFWP sites in the Bitterroot Valley.

If the Wagner House proves to be of insufficient size for the program itemized above, the Department may consider the use of an addition to the

to the Wagner House or an additional structure. Such additional space could also be used for on-site storage of maintenance materials.

The land surrounding the Wagner House visitor center should be developed with benches, a rack for distributing site brochures for times when the visitor center is closed, and an area where group tours can be gathered and given site orientation.

Parking Facility

A gravel or asphalt surfaced parking facility should be a central feature of the visitor orientation area. The parking facility should accomodate a minimum of twenty automobiles and three "long" vehicles such as motor homes or school buses.

Picnic Area

The visitor orientation area should include a picnic area for site visitors and school groups. This area should be equipped with picnic tables, refuse containers, drinking fountain, historical shade trees and historical fencing.

Walkways

The parking facility, picnic area, and visitor center should be linked together with a system of hard-surfaced (asphalt or asphalt with chip stone) walkways accessible to handicapped visitors. Benches for visitor resting should be located at intervals along these walkways.

Interpretive Devices

It is further recommended that the visitor orientation area include interpretive tools for site orientation. These should include interpretive markers for the presentation of natural history themes and Flathead Indian tipis (reproduced in canvas) for a discussion of Flathead

settlement around historic Fort Owen. Plantings of flora indigenous to the Bitterroot Valley and heirloom seed varieties of crops raised historically at Fort Owen should also be in the visitor orientation area. These plantings should be accompanied by interpretive markers.

Fort Entrance

It is recommended that the original South Gate entrance to Fort Owen be used as the main entrance of the historic site. An accurate reproduction of the original arched entrance to the Fort compound would help focus attention on this historically significant feature. An interpretive marker should be placed inside the Gate citing the significance of the South Gate entrance.

Site Landscaping

The rough and unkempt nature of the present Fort Owen grounds makes it difficult to distinguish between historically significant features and modern, insignificant piles of rocks, building materials, and other extraneous items. To remedy this a landscaping plan should be adopted that will improve the overall appearance of the site. Only those archaeological sites that are to be interpreted should be left open, all others should be reburied. A system of hard-surfaced walk-ways should connect the various structures and sites. Historically compatible and easily-maintained ground-cover should be introduced on the remainder of the site grounds. The entire site, both historic and visitor orientation areas, should be fenced with historically-accurate fencing materials in a style such as split-rail "stake and rider."

Wall and Building Foundation Identification

Unpainted logs presently demarcate the outline of the original Fort Owen plan. It is recommended that these logs be replaced with a hard-surface band, at grade level, in the width of the original foundation.

Such a band will be easily identified and conveniently maintained. An alternative to the flat, surface band is a low, adobe wall, no higher than 18" at any one point. This wall will better convey a sense of the space and volume of the original Fort. An interpretive marker can be used, if necessary, to explain the hypothetical nature of this boundary.

Archaeological Site

The Fort Owen site presently includes an exposed archaeological dig at the north end of the East Barracks. This site should be preserved for interpretation. The features now exposed should be stabilized or protected with a viewing dome. The presentation could be enhanced by returning excavated artifacts to the site to present an in-progress dig. An interpretive marker should be installed to discuss the information revealed in the site.

Well House

The entrances to the Well House are presently blocked because of the potential hazzard to site visitors the open well mouth presents. However, the well is an interesting feature and should be presented. A treated acrylic window in a wooden frame should be installed over the well mouth and the door barricades should be removed. A historically accurate pump, windlass, or other water-drawing device should be installed to complete the Well House interior.

Root House

The roof shelter presently in place over the archaeological remains of the Fort Owen Root House constitutes a major site intrusion and should be removed. Exterior restoration of the Root House, based on historical photographs and archaeological evidence, is recommended. The interior of the Root House should be finished to present interpretive

materials on historic archaeology at Fort Owen.

East Barracks

As the most visible and significant component of the Fort Owen site, the East Barracks will be the primary vehicle for presenting the recommended interpretive program. It is recommended that the following restoration and development items be considered for this structure:

1. Restoration of the original 6/6 pane windows.
2. Restoration of the adobe chimneys.
3. Installation in each room of electrical service, fire alarms, and security devices.
4. Complete interior restoration of the second room from the south as John Owen's office. (This room has previously been designated as John Owen's bedroom.)
5. Preparation of the remaining rooms for interpretive exhibits. (Some items presently displayed may be incorporated in one of the interpretive presentations. Those items remaining should be stored away from the site.)

INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND STRUCTURES AT FORT OWEN

The following section discusses interpretive themes recommended for development at Fort Owen. Themes are presented in the order a visitor would encounter them along the route of the suggested walking tour of the site. The tour begins at the parking lot and visitor center and proceeds to the picnic area for further orientation information or through the designated South entrance of the Fort complex. It continues in a counter-clockwise route along the East Barracks to the north boundaries and returns via the west side, concluding at the South Gate. (Refer to Interpretive Plan, figure 4.1.)

Themes are generally presented in close proximity to or within the

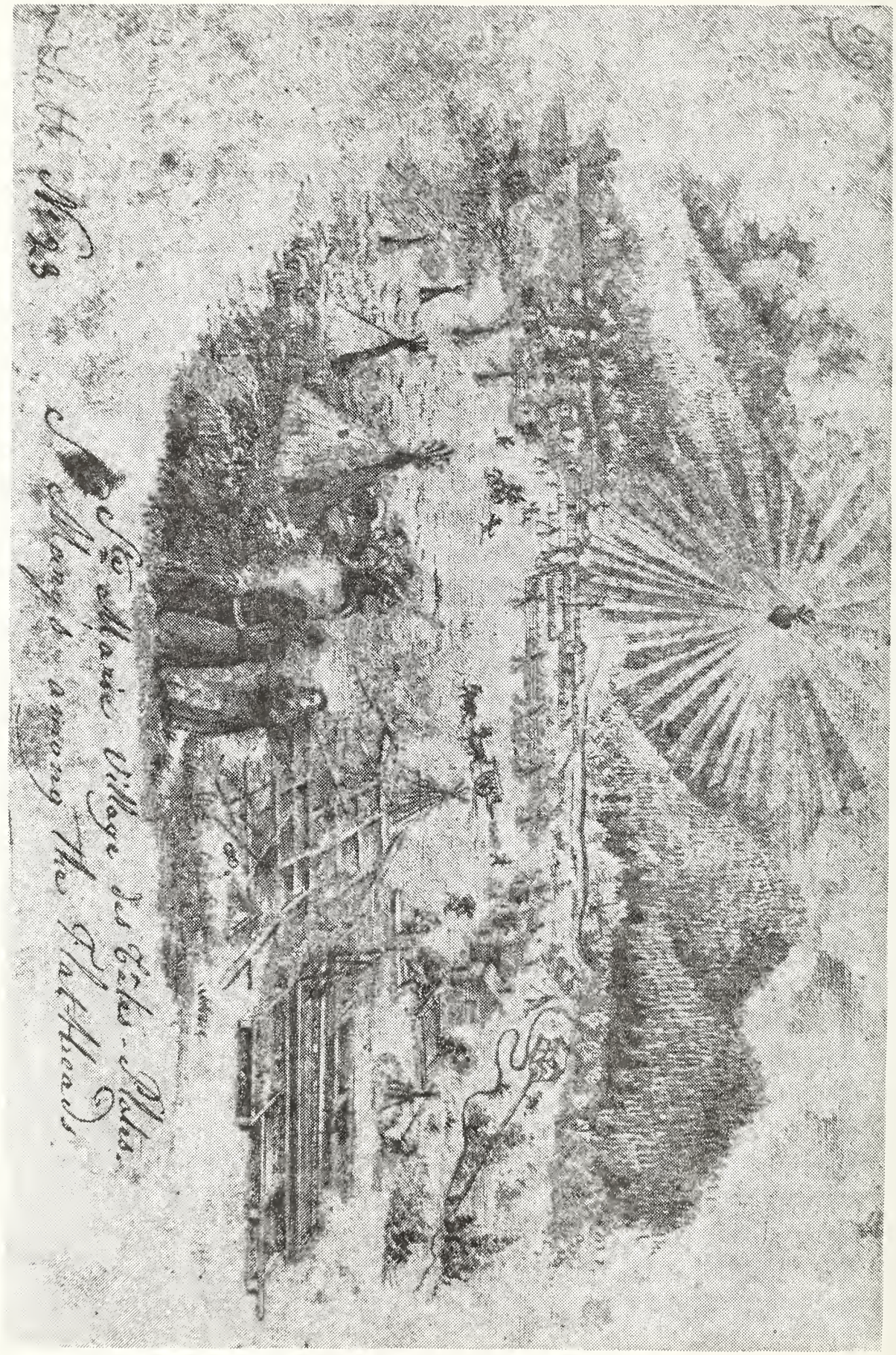


Figure 4.1: Jesuit construction at Fort Owen Site, c. 1846
Source: DeSmet Papers. Holland Library, Washington State University.

structure to which they are historically related. The one exception is the Wagner House which is adapted for use as a visitor center.

1. Theme: Welcome to Fort Owen
   Location: Near parking area
   Content: A brief statement introducing the site as well as a map guiding the visitor to the Visitors Center, picnic area, Historic Site, and restrooms should be illustrated on an interpretive marker.

2. Theme: Site Orientation
   Location: Wagner House
   Content: The Wagner House will serve to briefly introduce background information pertaining to:
   1. The historical significance and context of Fort Owen;
   2. Local geography;
   3. Local flora and fauna;
   4. Native inhabitants (the Flathead);
   5. Exploration of the area, including that of Lewis and Clark and the later railroad and military wagon road surveys conducted by Governor Isaac I. Stevens and Lieutenant John Mullan;
   6. Jesuit activities in the Bitterroot Valley, particularly those pertaining to the Society's occupation of the site from 1841 through 1850, and their construction of two Mission complexes, the first in 1841 and the second in 1846.

These themes should be interpreted through modular exhibits and multi-media presentations. The latter can be used for both site orientation and promotion.

Brochures or leaflets including a synopsis of Fort Owen's history, a map illustrating the recommended route for the self-guided tour, and rules or regulations regarding site behavior should be distributed at the Visitor Center. Furthermore, it is recommended that a receptionist/interpreter be employed to answer any questions regarding the site and to

aid the visitor with problems.

3. Theme: Natural History - Local Flora
Location: Various points along the walkway to picnic area
Content: Planning of flora indigenous to the Bitterroot Valley and heirloom seed varieties of crops raised at Fort Owen should be introduced along the walkways with interpretive markers identifying their variety and historic use by both Indians and Whites.

4. Theme: Flathead Indians at Fort Owen
Location: Between Visitor Center and South Wall
Content: The presence of the Flathead Indians in the Bitterroot Valley should be discussed on an interpretive marker placed adjacent to two canvas tipis. The marker should include a reproduction of Peter Tofft's illustration of Fort Owen in 1866, which portrays two Indian tipis erected near the South entrance of the Fort. The local Flathead population should be encouraged to participate in special events at which times these tipis could be outfitted with appropriate artifacts. In addition, tours may be gathered at the site for orientation lectures and demonstrations.

5. Theme: Fort Owen as a "haven in the wilderness"
Location: Near exterior reconstruction of South Gate
Content: The comforts and security offered by Fort Owen as an outpost of civilization, located in an extremely remote mountain valley should be discussed on an interpretive marker. To the many early day visitors at Fort Owen, the South Gate represented an opportunity to recall a way of life they had known in the East.

6. Theme: Interpreting archaeological evidence in an effort to discover various aspects of life at Fort Owen
Location: Root Cellar

Content: The ways in which archaeology has informed us about the life at Fort Owen should be displayed in modular exhibits using those artifacts excavated in archaeological digs.

A secondary emphasis should be placed upon the archaeological methodology employed in site excavations and general archaeological practices.

This area could also be explained through mechanical interpretive devices such as audio or multi-media tools.

7. Theme: John Owen's character and background

Location: East Barracks--South Room

Content: An examination of John Owen as trader, traveler, writer, miller, husband and gentleman should be interpreted in a modular exhibit. Through the exploration of the multi-faceted character of the proprietor, the equally many-sided appearance of Fort Owen will be revealed. Fort Owen was indeed a trade, agricultural and social center in the Bitterroot Valley.

The adjoining room (the second from the South) should be interpreted along radically different lines from the rest of the site. The room, designated here as Owen's Office,should be completely restored using a combination of historic and reproduced furnishings. Additional research must be conducted to accurately furnish the room in a manner that will reveal the many aspects of Owen's life and character.

Barriers sympathetic with the existing historic fabric should be installed in each doorway preventing public access to the room. A label should be attached to each barrier explaining room use.

Here again, mechanical devices present a viable option for interpretation.

8. Theme: Visitors at Fort Owen

Location: East Barracks--Guest Room

Content: From its purchase in 1850 to its sale in 1872, the South

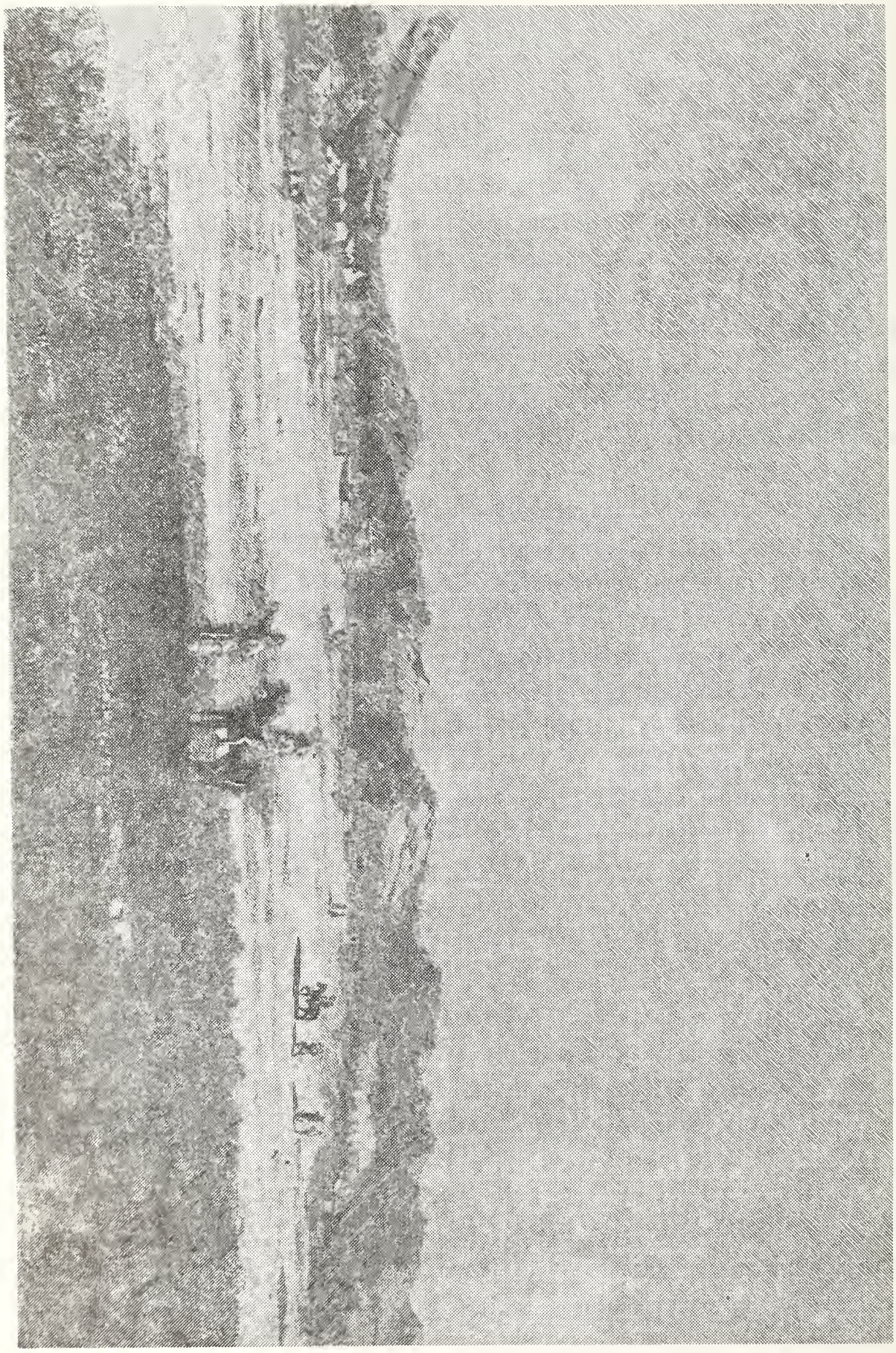


Figure 4.2: Sohon's sketch of Fort Owen, 1854
Source: Mansfield Library, University of Montana

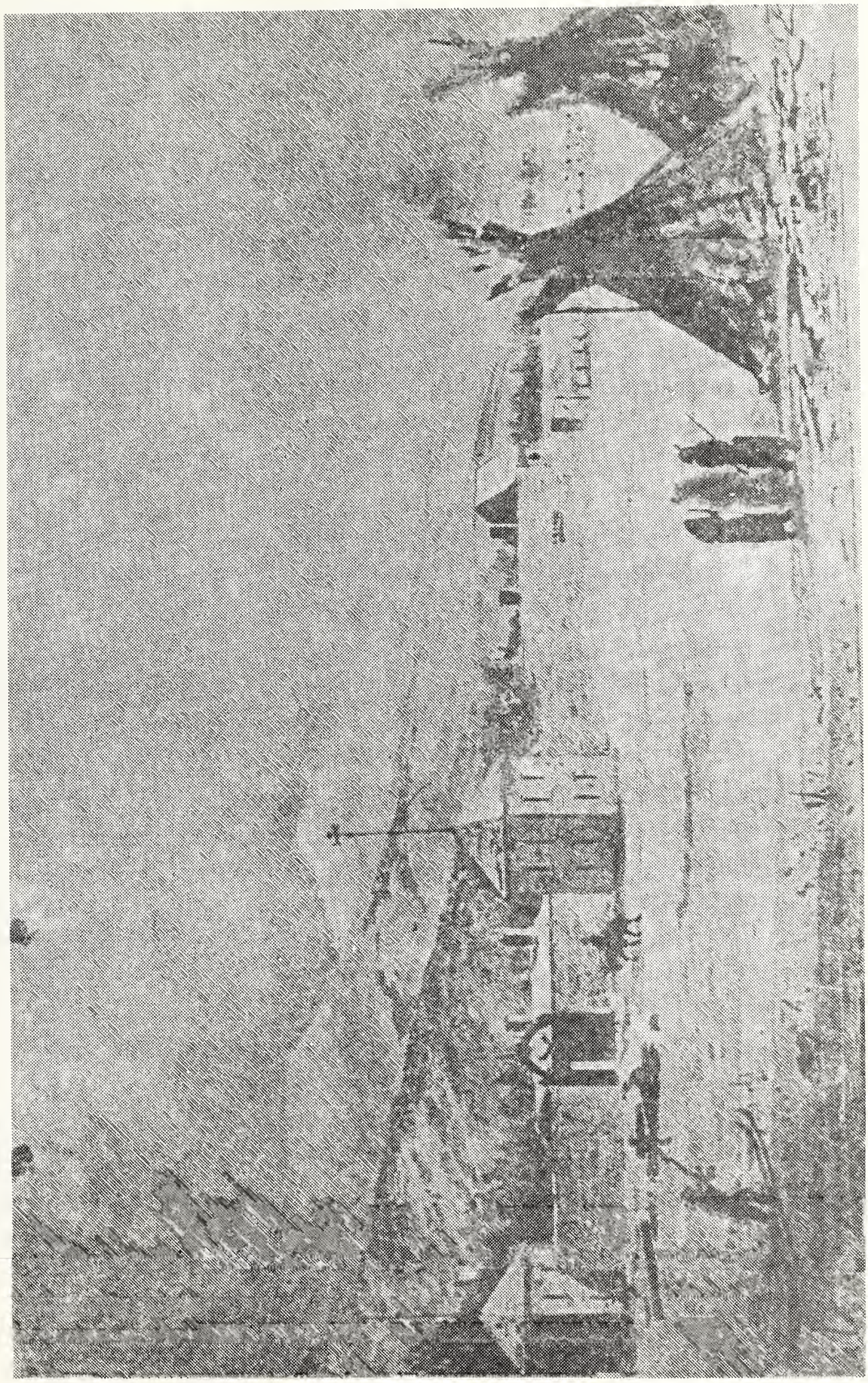


Figure 4.3: Peter Tofft's illustration of Fort Owen, 1866.
Source: Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Gate of Fort Owen welcomed an incredibly wide variety of visitors to its interior. Initially, traders such as Angus McDonald, Michael Ogden, and Richard Grant, as well as Flathead Chiefs Victor and Charlo passed through the entrance. Surveyors including Stevens and Mullan followed, as did Jesuit Fathers Anthony Ravalli and Joseph Giorda. With an increase in settlement by farmers and miners, the Fort witnessed yet another transition in the Valley's way of life.

This location should also acknowledge the impressions of the Fort maintained by its visitors, including its designation as a "haven" and a "castle."

These topics should be developed in modular exhibits containing illustrations, maps, documents, and artifacts. The use of mechanical devices may be used as supplements to the exhibit.

9. Theme: Life at Fort Owen

Location: East Barracks--Dormitory

Content: This room will present an overall view of the life at Fort Owen including social life, holidays, labor, employees, education, Indian-White relations, food, and women's roles. A modular exhibit containing illustrations, maps, documents, and artifacts should be established.

As with the presentations of related exhibits in the East Barracks, this exhibit, also, presents audio or multi-media interpretive possibilities.

The potential for special events programming is extremely high for the above theme. Lectures, demonstrations, workshops, or living history presentations are applicable.

10. Theme: The World around Fort Owen

Location: East Barracks--Dormitory

Content: As its second major interpretive theme, the Dormitory should house a modular exhibit exploring such related topics as the

Oregon Trail and its many branches the Stevens Railroad Survey, the Stevens Treaties, the construction of the Mullan Road, the growth of Hell Gate, and increased white settlement due to mining and agricultural opportunities in the area. Each exercised profound influence on the development and maintenance of the Fort. Supplementary information may again be related through mechanical devices.

11. Theme: Fort Owen through Time
Location: North end of East Barracks
Content: An interpretive marker should show how the features revealed in archaeological digs in this area illustrate the evolution of Fort Owen. Initial Jesuit development, palisade construction, final adobe construction, deterioration of the structures and grounds during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and reconstruction of the East Barracks should be addressed.

12. Theme: Owen's Donation Claim
Location: Northeast corner of compound
Content: An interpretive marker should discuss the extensive acreage surrounding the Fort, claimed by Owen and his wife, along with the agricultural uses of the land.

13. Theme: The commercial Grist Mill and the Saw Mill
Location: Northwest corner of the compound
Content: Situated where the visitor can observe the site occupied by the Fort Owen mills, an interpretive marker should discuss the history, significance, and location of the mills. The marker should include the reproduction of Peter Tofft's illustration of the site.

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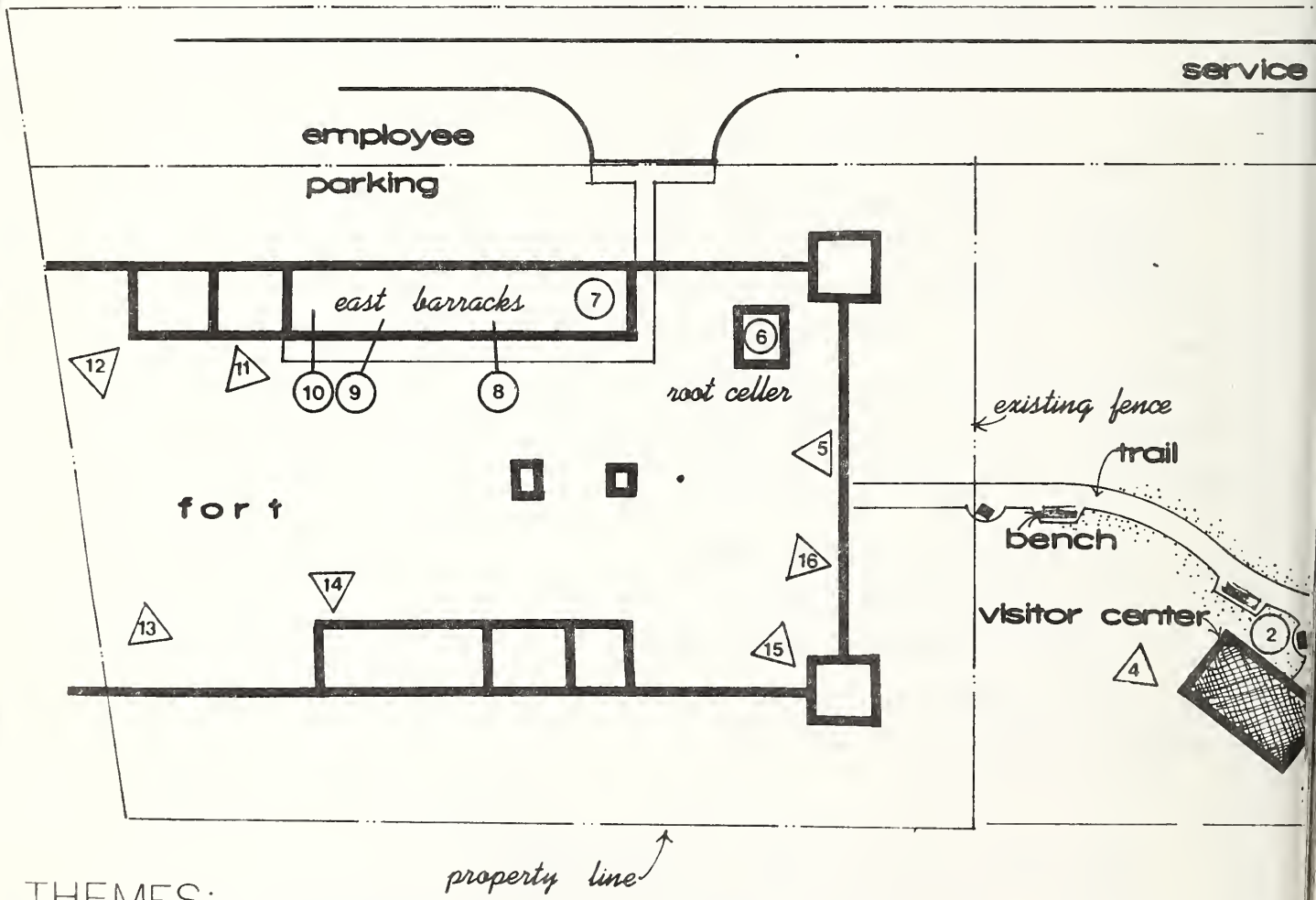

THEMES:

1. Welcome to Fort Owen
2. Site Orientation
3. Natural History--Local Flora
4. Flathead Indians at Fort Owen
5. Fort Owen as a "haven in the wilderness"
6. Interpreting archaeological evidence explore the aspects of life at Fort
7. John Owen's character and background
8. Visitors at Fort Owen
9. Life at Fort Owen
10. The World around Fort Owen

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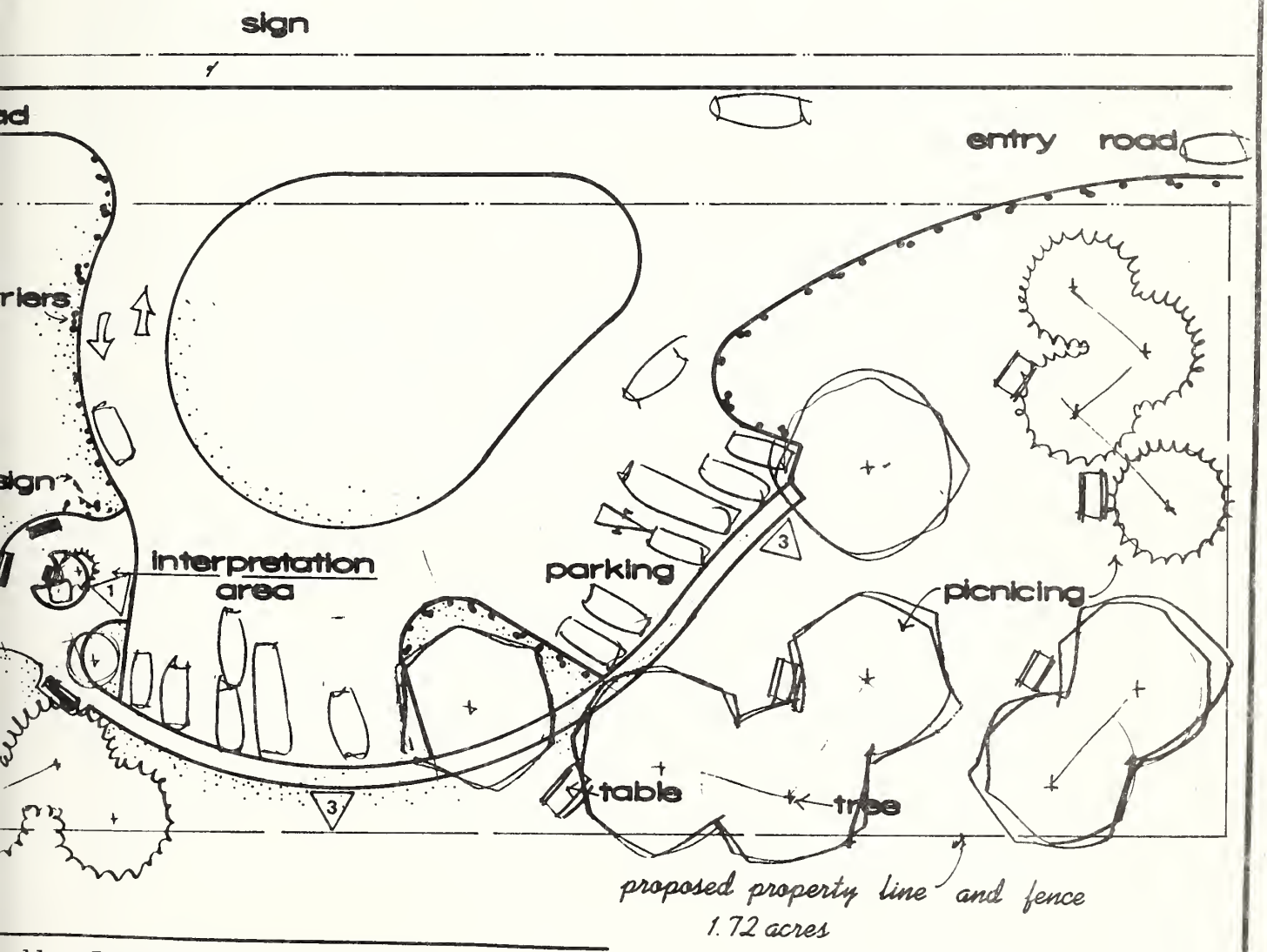


11. Fort Owen through time
12. Owen's Donation Claim
13. Fort Owen's Grist and Saw Mills
14. West Barracks--the working structure
15. Protection: Farm and Fortress
16. Construction

14. Theme: West Barracks--The Working Structure

Location: West Barracks

Content: An interpretive marker with a plan and elevation of the structure noting rooms and their use should be placed adjacent to the site. The rooms include the trade room, kitchen, storeroom, and workshop. Each room, based upon historical documentation of use, lends itself to specific lectures, discussions, or living history programs.

15. Theme: Protection: Farm and Fortress

Location: Southwest Bastion

Content: The original intent and ultimate use of the Fort Owen Bastions, historically the most dominant architectural feature of the compound, should be discussed on an interpretive marker. Although bastions were built with loopholes intended for battle, they were used for grain storage and a doctor's office.

16. Theme: Construction

Location: West side of South entrance

Content: A minimal number of natural adobe bricks should be laid on the west side of the south entrance. An interpretive marker will present both methods and hindrances of adobe construction in the Valley.

PROGRAMMATIC DEVELOPMENT

To supplement and enrich the interpretive programs recommended for implementation, the Fort Owen State Monument should initiate special program development.

Education

The development of an education program at Fort Owen should entail

the planning and implementation of school tours or field trips to the site. School tours contribute as a major visitor source providing the student with opportunities for direct observations and experiences, these being vital elements in learning. Each class or group deserves tour techniques adapted to its particular needs, which vary with age, background, and particularly, with subjects studied. The tours at Fort Owen should be planned according to curriculum based educational objectives. Because students obtain and retain more factual information and demonstrate a greater interest through informal dramatizations, appropriate activities should be planned at various points throughout the tour. Seasonal interpretive possibilities include historic craft demonstrations, role playing of personalities from the fur trade era or the Jesuit period, reenactment of Flathead Treaty settlement, demonstrations of historic wilderness preparations and techniques, and period amusements.

Opportunities for educational development of themes of Fort Owen should be considered as year round options. During the summer months, implementation of informal campfire talks may be presented on-site near the Visitor Center, between the Visitor Center and Fort Compound, or within the Compound. The exploration of the transportation routes used by Owen and his contemporaries by foot or horseback presents a unique off-site experience. A series of conferences, forums, workshops or lectures may be conducted both on or off the site. Possible alternative locations would include the St. Mary's Church, or local meeting halls.

Special Events

In conjunction with recommended interpretive options, it is suggested that special event or program days be planned.

The documentary evidence available invites the development of

such programs as:

1. Seasonal celebrations such as spring festivals based on the early rendezvous of the fur traders along with the planting of crops. A special event day during the fall would emphasize the harvest and food storage. All of these are easily within the confines of the Fort Owen Master Interpretive Plan.

2. Holidays such as the 4th of July and Christmas are referenced in the Fort Owen journals. Special events could recreate these historic activities.

3. Special programs exploring historic foods could include types of plants/crops grown in the area, how they are prepared, how they are preserved, medicinal uses of the plants, and uses of the plants by the Natives as compared to that of the White settlers.

4. A "Founder's Day" celebration on November 5 could be observed, to commemorate the acquisition of the Jesuit property by John Owen. Period entertainments, including historical music, dancing, story-telling, foods, and mule races could highlight such a program.

ADMINISTRATION

To effectively implement the interpretive and programmatic developments this plan recommends, a well-defined administrative plan should be created for Fort Owen State Monument. An agreement between the Stevensville Historical Society and the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks should be worked out whereby the two groups share administrative responsibilities for the site. The following topics should be addressed in this plan:

Maintenance

As the Fort Owen site becomes developed and visitation increases, a program for daily and seasonal maintenance should be established.

Historical exhibits require daily cleaning and security checks as well as seasonal repairs and replacement. Increased visitation will also effect greater wear on the structural fabric of the historic buildings. This deterioration should be monitered and adjustments in the interpretive program should follow, that will either reduce or completely prevent further damages. The Visitor Center and site grounds also will require daily maintenance during the tourist season.

Operations

As the interpretive program at Fort Owen develops, a staff of one or more persons will be needed to work in the Visitor Center, conduct educational and special tours, and generally interpret the site. If a program of school tours in the spring and fall is instituted, personnel will be required to assemble and distribute tour information, schedule tour reservations, and conduct on-site orientation and tours.

Collection Acquisition and Management

If a program of partial or full restoration of the historic structures at Fort Owen is developed to include collection acquisition, a plan governing the program will be required. Such a plan should include well-defined management, collection catalog, storage, and exhibition. (See Appendix B for details concerning collection management.)

Special Event Planning and Promotion

A special events program has been recommended for the interpretation of Fort Owen. To effectively implement such a program, each special event will have to be thoroughly researched (regarding the historical basis for the event), planned, directed, and promoted. Whether accomplished by a group or an individual, the lines of responsibility and communication should be clearly demarcated.

Fund Raising

Funds are needed both for the development and operation of Fort Owen. To effectively and efficiently raise money, it is necessary to investigate potential funding sources and to develop a fund raising plan. In Montana, potential funding sources include:

1. Public Grants (Montana Committee for the Humanities, Montana Arts Council, Montana Coal Tax Fund, Institute for Museum Services, etc.)
2. Corporate Grants and Gifts (ARCO, Burlington Northern, Lee Enterprises, Champion International)
3. Private Donations
4. Memorial Funds
5. Membership in Fort Owen Foundation
6. On-site Donation Box
7. Special fund-raising events (auctions, dinners, etc.)

INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENTS RECOMMENDED FOR THE 1982 SEASON

All of the interpretive recommendations addressed in Phase I of the Master Interpretive Plan are considered necessary to adequately interpret Fort Owen State Monument. However, it is recognized that only partial implementation can be effected for the 1982 season. For this reason, we suggest the following modification of the interpretive recommendations to serve as an "Interim Plan."

Parking and Site Orientation

Until the proposed 1.72 acres of land can be purchased for visitor parking, orientation, and entrance to the historic site, the present parking area, on the east side of the East Barracks, should be retained. The present entrance to the Fort, on the south side of the East Barracks, should also be retained, but should be enhanced with an interpretive

marker and, perhaps, a drinking fountain.

East Barracks

Plans for the eventual interpretation of the East Barracks detail interior restoration of one room, and installation of modular exhibits in the other rooms. For the 1982 season, temporary modular exhibits are planned for all of the rooms in the structure. Site orientation and background, as well as many of the other themes presented in the Master Interpretive Plan, will be presented in this exhibit. A script and design for this exhibit have been prepared. The installation of modular exhibits in the East Barracks will necessitate removal of all exhibit, building, and maintenance materials presently stored in the building.

Archaeological Site

The archaeological site at the north end of the East Barracks should be stabilized and interpreted for the 1982 season. An interpretive marker for this site should be installed.

Well House

For the 1982 season, the Well House presentation should be upgraded with a transparent cover for the well mouth, removal of the door barricades, and the addition of interpretive materials.

Root House

Work on the restoration of the Root House exterior should begin during the summer, 1982. If work cannot be completed during the season, an interpretive marker should be temporarily installed to identify the structure and discuss its historical function.

Wagner House

The historical furnishings currently on exhibit in the Wagner House should be retained for the 1982 season. The interpretive materials presented in connection with these furnishings, however, should be directed more toward their relation to life at Fort Owen, rather than the individual donor families.

Site Landscaping

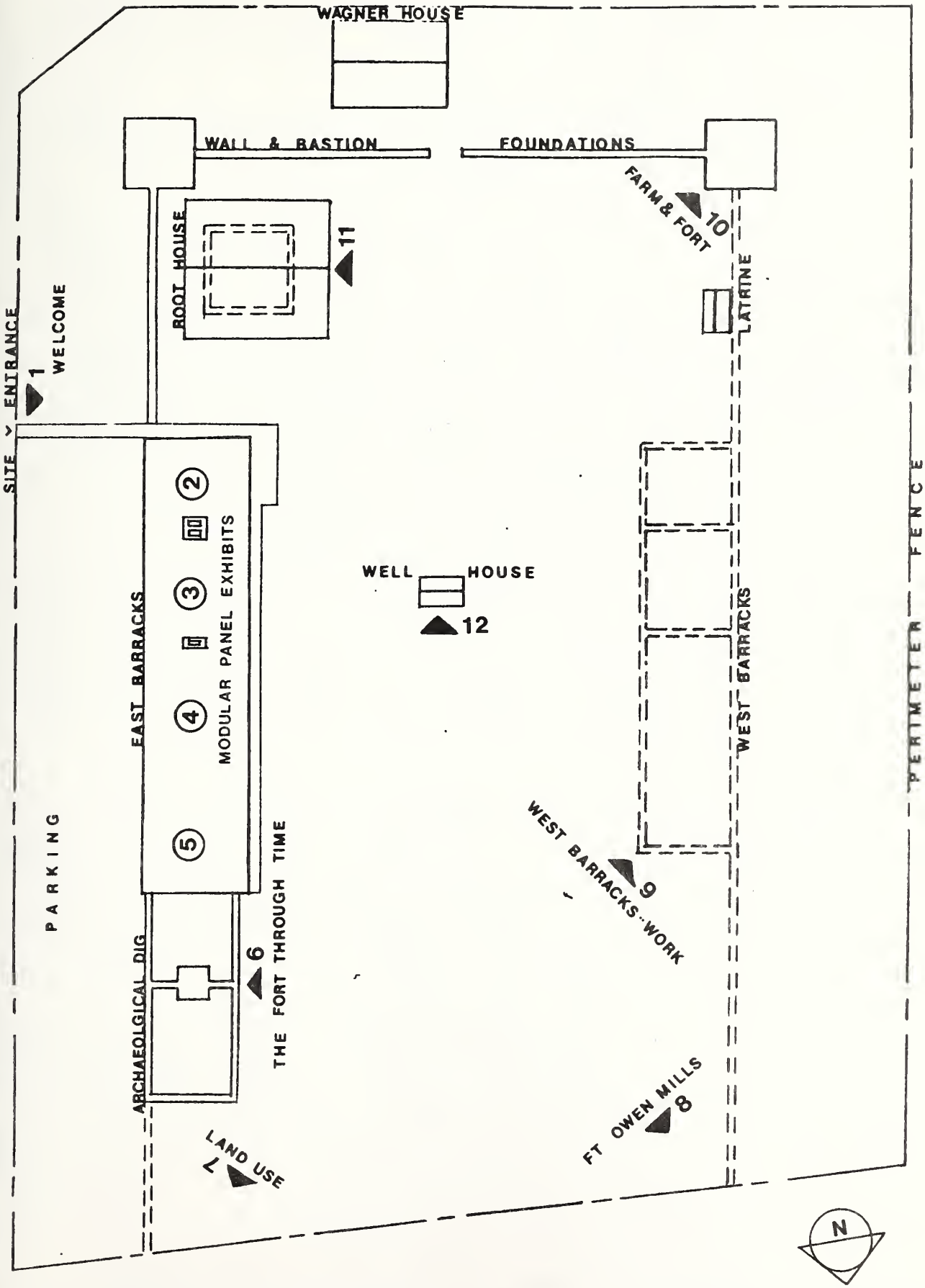
The grounds within the Fort Owen compound should be cleaned and "seeded" for the 1982 season. All extraneous building materials should be removed. It is further recommended that the logs presently used to demarcate the plan of Fort Owen be replaced with the recommended hard-surface or low adobe walls.

Interpretive Markers

The Phase I interpretive recommendations suggest that a series of interpretive markers be installed at various points within the Fort Owen compound. The text and design for these markers have been prepared; they should be constructed and installed for the 1982 season.

Site Brochure

A new site guide brochure also is planned for the 1982 season. This brochure will present a map of the site, historical and interpretive information, and plans for the future development of Fort Owen State Monument. The text and graphic materials for this brochure have been prepared.



FORT OWEN STATE MONUMENT
Recommendations for 1982 Development
Figure 4.5

« « » » EXISTING SITE PLAN

▲ INTERPRETIVE MARKER: EXTERIOR

○ MODULAR PANEL EXHIBIT: INTERIOR

Recommendations for 1892 Development

The following interpretive themes are recommended for development for 1982 at Fort Owen State Monument:

1. Welcome to Fort Owen (Interpretive Marker)
2. Introduction to Fort Owen (Modular Panel Exhibit, Room I, East Barracks)
3. John Owen (Moudlar Panel Exhibit, Room II, East Barracks)
4. Fort Owen's Visitors (Modular Panel Exhibit, Room III, East Barracks)
5. Life at Fort Owen (Modular Panel Exhibit, Room IV, East Barracks)
6. The Fort Through Time (Interpretive Marker)
7. Land Use (Interpretive Marker)
8. The Fort Owen Mills (Interpretive Marker)
9. West Barracks: Work (Interpretive Marker)
10. Farm and Fort (Interpretive Marker)
11. Root House (Interpretive Marker)
12. Wellhouse (Interpretive Marker)

Complete specifications for implementation of the above interpretive devices are included under separate cover.

Schedule for Implementation of 1982 Interpretive Development

April 1, 1982: Construction of temporary wall at North end of Room IV in East Barracks (as per 1982 Implementation Plan). Thi space should then be used for storage of those interpretive devices presently used at Fort Owen which are not incorporated in the 1982 Implementation Plan. Construction should begin on interpretive markers and modular panel exhibits (as per 1982 Implementation Plan) Site brochure should be printed for distribution

April 15, 1982: Present interpretive devices used at Fort Owen State Monument should be removed and placed in storage, deaccessioned, or disposed of

June 1, 1982: All interpretive markers should be installed

July 1, 1982: All modular panel exhibits should be installed

Chapter Five

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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OPTIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The interpretive recommendations detailed in the previous chapter were designed to serve two functions: to present historical and contemporary themes in order to better understand the structural and archaeological remains at Fort Owen State Monument and to create a foundation upon which further interpretive developments could be built. This chapter presents two options for physical development at Fort Owen that initially effect a greater unification of the structural aspects of the site. This, in turn, will create the necessary background for implementing an interpretive program with increased vitality, more opportunities for visitor activities and participation, and for greater historical depth. Each option details a radically different approach to presenting non-existing historic structures: reconstruction and representation. In addition to the obvious design differences, each option should be judged by how it addresses the following management concerns.

1. Interpretive Objectives: How do each of these options address the objectives stated in the interpretive plan? These include site integrity, interpretive content, and site implementation.

2. Funding Flexibility: If these options are implemented, how will they meet the demands of uncertain and fluctuating levels of funding? Can each program be kept intact during years of low funding or will each demand a consistently high level of funding?

3. Cost Effectiveness: The ratio of interpretive development realized per dollar spent must also be an issue in deciding which interpretive option to adopt. This in no way implies that the least expensive option is preferred, but rather, that there is a reasonable interpretive return for monies invested in the site.

4. Upkeep and Maintenance: Each of the options presented involves particular staffing and maintenance requirements. These should be realized in

terms of personnel needs and agency funding for program and physical maintenance on a daily, seasonal, and annual basis.

Option I: Reconstruction of Fort Owen Walls and Structures

The reconstruction of the Fort Owen walls, bastions, and West Barracks has been discussed, more or less seriously, for at least twenty years. In addition to the basic reconstruction of these features, proponents of this plan envision the complete refurnishing of the interior rooms, courtyard buildings, animal enclosures and other physical aspects of the site for which documentation exists.

Such development would serve as an excellent foundation for a living history program. From an interpretive perspective, it would permit an in-depth presentation of life at Fort Owen in the early 1860's. Such details as daily work routines, food preparation, celebration of special holidays, period blacksmithing, and carpentry could be extensively explored.

A drawback to this plan is that Fort Owen's greatest significance lies in the transitions it witnessed and experienced. From the fur trade of the early 1850's to the Agency days of the late 1850's and early 1860's to the grist mill days of the mid to late 1860's, daily work routines, sources of income, and life in the West, in general, changed dramatically. The appearance of the Fort also changed drastically form the palisaded Mission of 1850 to the adobe Fort of 1860.

Another drawback to the total reconstruction of the Fort Owen compound is that much of the daily work at Fort Owen took place outside of the Fort walls. Agriculture played a significant role in the economic life of Fort Owen from the very beginning. When the commercial grist mill was completed in 1865, it pumped new life into the Fort's sagging economy, quickly becoming the primary source of income for the Fort. Reconstruction of the Fort compound alone would completely ignore this vital force of life at Fort Owen in the mid-1860's.

A major interpretive dilemma now posed by the structural remains at Fort Owen is how to convey the sense of volume and scale of the original

Fort and its relation to the vast wilderness surrounding it. Total reconstruction would completely alleviate this problem. It would also help recreate a sense of historic time by literally closing out the modern world.

While closing out the modern world has interpretive advantages, it also has disadvantages. The preservation and archaeology of Fort Owen have been designated as important interpretive themes. These themes would be innappropriate in a period presentation of the 1850's and 1860's.

If total reconstruction is pursued at Fort Owen, an in-depth furnishing study and restoration plan will have to be first completed. This study would analyze all available contemporary details concerning the buildings at Fort Owen and choose a restoration date. The study would also determine the nature of the historical presentation: restoration, recreation, or representation. If sufficient material for an accurate restoration or recreation is not possible, information for a representative restoration could be drawn from other early forts such as Fort Laramie, Bent's Fort, and Fort Hall.

A further development of the reconstruction idea would include the acquisition and development of Owen's original donation claim. This option would facilitate the reconstruction of the grist mill, the cluster of cabins and tipis around the Fort compound, and the extensive agriculture surrounding the Fort. State purchase of the entire donation claim would also enable the recreational development of the lands bordering the Bitterroot River for uses such as fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and various motorized sports.

Option II: Symbolic or Ghost Reconstruction

An option which presents an innovative alternative to historic site reconstruction in Montana is what is referred to as symbolic or ghost reconstruction. The plan, adopted at the Franklin Court and House Historic Site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, opts for the reconstruction of the site by recreating the structural framework and floorplan of the building or buildings.

The material used for symbolic reconstruction should be compatible with that of the existing structures on the site or with those of original construction. If implemented at Fort Owen, possibilities would include a form of treated wood or steel beams. The latter should be finished so as not to intrude with the site integrity. As such, either of these materials would be clearly distinct from the early wooden or adobe construction of the Fort, yet they would adequately recreate the spatial volume occupied by the original walls and structures. These materials are easily maintained and in the case of the steel beams, extremely durable.

Ghost reconstruction is a non-traditional method of representing a no longer extant historic sturcture. It seeks to capture the idea of the historic mass and presence, rather than the physical structure itself. Because of this, it invites the site visitor to take up with the presentation on a more conceptual level of themes and ideas, rather than walls and roofs. It sparks imagination and provokes curiosity in a way that will enable a deeper understanding of the site.

Ghost reconstruction is extremely adaptable to interpreting all primary, secondary, and tertiary themes presented at Fort Owen. The site is not locked into a specific translation of a certain period of time, and therefore lends itself to a more solid interpretation of transition and change. This is of particular importance to a site such as Fort Owen which has witnessed such dramatic changes throughout its history.

Ghost reconstruction could effectively interpret the sense of vastness of the surrounding country as well as that of protection felt by those who took shelter within the adobe walls of Fort Owen. It allows for visual access to almost all areas of interior and exterior concern. At Fort Owen, the visitor would be able to stand within the compound and look out towards the lands occupied by the grist and saw mills. He may, perhaps, walk along a bastion catwalk in search of imagined Indians or trappers, or simply to enjoy the view of the Bitterroot Mountains and Fort Owen grounds.

Ghost reconstruction also offers an advantage in terms of its relatively low impact on the archaeological resources of the site. Existing foundations could continue to be explored and excavated to further our understanding of life at the Fort.

The physical construction involved in the ghost reconstruction of Fort Owen would include:

1. Framing of the Fort walls and the bastions;
2. Framing of the West Barracks;
3. Outlining of room layout with placement of doors, windows, and fireplaces indicated.

The West Barracks, in particular, lends itself to open air demonstrations and living history presentations in each of the rooms. Food preparation, blacksmithing, carpentry and trade economics are some available options.

As in total reconstruction, acquisition and development of the original donation claim could only serve to enhance understanding of life at Fort Owen. Land could be used for outdoor recreational activities in all seasons. Ghost reconstruction of the mills and cabins surrounding the Fort's walls could become sites for theme-related demonstrations or living history presentations.

Option Review

During the review phase of this report, the following remarks were submitted by Marcella Sherfy, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer:

> We would strongly urge that reconstruction not be treated as an option in considering Fort Owen. Preservation standards support reconstruction only when (a) exact information about a lost structure is known (b) reconstruction can occur without damage to archaeological remains of the original structure and (c) when reconstruction is necessary to public understanding of a historic site. These fairly rigid principles reflect a premise which recognizes that most localities have more original historic properties than they have funds to protect or preserve. Reconstruction creates a new structure requiring public construction and maintenance funds that could go to actual preservation. Secondly, reconstruction devalues original surviving resources and confuses visitors on what is and isn't actually the "survivor" from the past.

Chapter Six

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER 6

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTES ON THE HISTORIC SOURCES

Researching the history of Fort Owen presents some interesting, yet often frustrating problems for the historian. The collected journals, letters, and ledgers of Fort proprietor, John Owen, provides an unusually intimate view of the author, but they frequently raise as many questions as they answer. The material is so personal and specific that the reader gets bogged down in detail for want of more context and a broader overview. Nonetheless, The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen (in Two Volumes), superbly edited by Seymour Dunbar and Paul C. Phillips and Men And Trade On The Northwest Frontier, edited and thoroughly annotated by George F. Weisel, provide the most important sources of historical information about Fort Owen. Though both editions have been out of print for many years, copies of the works should be secured for the Fort Owen State Monument.

Other materials contemporary to the Fort Owen journals, relating to the general history of the Northwest, were useful in preparing the historical overview. These works include Letters and Sketches, by Father Pierre Jean DeSmet,S.J.; Report on the Construction of a Military Road From Fort Walla to Fort Benton by Capt. John Mullan, USA.; "Mengarini's Narrative of the Rockies"; and the journals and writings included in Raymond Settle's The March of the Mounted Riflemen. Also of interest is Frank H. Woody's reminiscence, "A Sketch of the Early History of Western Montana". More contemporary works relating to the history of Fort Owen and the Northwest include Ghent's The Road to Oregon and Chittenden's classic, The American Fur Trade of the Far West. Evan's two recent works, St. Mary's in the Rocky Mountains and Good Samaritan of the Northwest, and Fahey's The Flathead Indians, provide excellent support materials for Fort Owen. Montana Genesis, by The Stevensville Historical Society provides a broad, yet very readable overview of the history of the Bitterroot Valley.

NOTES ON INTERPRETATION SOURCES

There is a growing body of literature in subject areas related to the Fort Owen project. This is a relatively new field with many good works published every year. It is recommended that a book and magazine budget be established for Fort Owen State Monument. A complete library could easily be established and maintained for about $300 yearly.

General Works

The American Association for State and Local History has published several excellent books on the history and administration of museums. The most recent, and most readable, is E.P. Alexander's Museums in Motion, which traces the history of the museum movement in America. Older, but also excellent books are Ellis Burcaw's Introduction to Museum Work and Carl Guthe's The Management of Small History Museums. These books provide a solid background in American museum history, development, typology, and administration.

Interpretation

First published in 1957 and reprinted numerous times, Freeman Tilden's Interpreting Our Heritage is a good introduction to historical interpretation. A more recent publication is Alderson and Low's Interpretation of Historic Sites, which complements Tilden.

In developing interpretation in a site such as Fort Owen, it is useful to visit as many other museums and historic sites and to collect as many published interpretive plans as possible.

Collection Management and Maintenance

Chenall's Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging presents a concise guide to collection cataloging that is adaptable to computer-based

retrieval systems. Many museums are now using this book as a basis for their collection catalogs and it is highly recommended for Fort Owen. Reible's Registration Methods for the Small Museum also is good and should be purchased for the Fort.

Guthe and Kramer's Technical Leaflets are examples of the fine series published by the American Association for State and Local History in their monthly magazine, History News. It is recommended that the entire series be examined for acquisition.

Guldbeck's The Care of Historical Collections is an excellent survey of collection needs from the point of view of a conservator. It is interesting, readable, and should be a part of every museum library. More specialized, but also good, is Keck's A Handbook on the Care of Paintings.

Chambers' Cyclical Maintenance for Historic Buildings was prepared for the National Park Service and is one of the few handbooks available on the subject. It would be a good guide for use in developing a maintenance program for the historic structures at Fort Owen.

Topical Works

Works on specific museum techniques and problems are also becoming increasingly available. Seale's Recreating the Historic House Interior is an excellent, step-by-step guide to researching and refurnishing historic houses. Again, the American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet series is useful, with brochures such as Pisney's "Historical Markers: Planning Local Programs."

Arminta Neal's Exhibits for the Small Museum: A Handbook is a good guide to basic design principles, procedures, and economy. This is a basic work that should be a part of all museum libraries.

The books cited above represent a small fraction of those currently available. An excellent bibliographic series is now being published by the American Association for State and Local History. Developed by

Frederick Rath and Merrilyn O'Connell, five volumes have been published, all of which are relevant to the Fort Owen project. Collectively entitled A Bibliography on Historical Organization Practices, the series now includes Historic Preservation (Vol. 1), Care and Conservation of Collections (Vol. 2), Interpretation (Vol. 3), Documentation of Collections (Vol. 4), and Administration (Vol. 5).

Organizations

The past 20 years have witnessed a great proliferation of historical organizations and associations with interests related to the Fort Owen State Monument. Many of these publish a periodic journal, hold annual meetings, and sponsor workshops. Several of these organizations are particularly relevant to the work at Fort Owen and should be investigated for membership. These include:

American Association for State and Local History
1400 Eighth Avenue South
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

American Association of Museums
2233 Wisconsin Avenue Northwest, Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20007

Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums
Smithsonian Institution
12th and Constitution Aveneu, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20256

Association for Preservation Technology
Post Box 2487
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5W6 Canada

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20036

Society for Industrial Archaeology
Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering
National Museum of History and Technology
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

has been bound as a seperate volume with the

HISTORIC STRUCTURES ANALYSIS

APPENDIX B

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The concepts of museums and collections are inseparable. The organized presentation of three-dimensional artifacts, specimens, buildings, or entire towns is the singular criterion that distinguishes museums from other methods of disseminating historical information. Books, magazines, films, lectures, and photographs provide information about historical ideas, events, personalities, and human values, but only museums encompass all of the media and historical objects. By combining traditional historical resources with collections of historical objects in a vigorous museum program, visitors can become active participants in the ideas that create history.

Although historic objects and structures provide rich information about the past, they are fragile, vulnerable, and expensive to acquire and maintain. Assembling a meaningful collection is time-consuming and requires extensive knowledge of social and cultural history. Objects made of wood, metal, leather, paper, and glass are subject to environmental deterioration, breakage, and other damage that can severely reduce or completely destroy their value as historical documents.

However, a well-planned, carefully maintained, and creatively presented collection program can vastly enhance the visitor's appreciation of life at Fort Owen. Before expanding the historical collections at Fort Owen State Monument the following considerations should be addressed:

> ... Museums include a broad array of diverse institutions that have come to be an important part of the intellectual and emotional life of man. Most of them have as their primary attribute a collections of tangible objects which they care for and hold in trust for the benefit and use of mankind, present and future....[1]

Before an active collection program can commence, objectives, policies, and guidelines determining the scope and mechanics of the program must be established. The purpose of the museum and how the collection will serve this purpose must be defined. It must be determined what is to be collected, how the present collection fits into this plan, how the collection will be exhibited and interpreted, and how the collection will be researched, authenticated, and preserved.[2]

Collection Use

Decisions will have to be made about the use of Fort Owen's historical collection. Possibilities include a research collection as well as an exhibit collection. It will also have to be established whether collection items will be handled by visitors (perhaps as part of living history demonstrations) or whether they will be maintained in a deterioration-free environment.

Physical Scope

The size and variety of the collection must be decided. It can be definitive, representative, or selective. For instance, it can include examples of every known type of agricultural implement ever used on the Fort Owen farms or only representative types. Decisions must also be made about whether deteriorated items or replica objects will be collected.

Cultural Scope

The collection might consist of only items made or used at Fort Owen might include all of the frontier. The Fort Owen collection can also be restricted to one specific period (such as the fur trade period) or it can include the entire period of Owen's proprietorship.

Collection Acquisition

The three traditional means of acquiring historical collections relevant to Fort Owen State Monument include purchase, donation, and loan (both private and institutiona).

Purchase

While most major museums establish funds for collection development, the majority of smaller institutions find it beyond their means or potentially interfering with a donation-based program. It may be advantageous to create some sort of endowment or memorial fund for collection acquisition at Fort Owen. If so, it will be necessary to create a mechanism for determing how purchased objects will be selected, what the price limits will be, and who will have the authority to make purchases. In many museums such decisions are made by a collection committee. For Fort Owen such a committee might include various Parks' personnel along with members of the Stevensville Historical Society, consultants from historical museums (such as the Montana Historical Society) and private art and antique dealers.

Donations

Donations may be the preferred means of acquiring collections for Fort Owen both in terms of cost and public participation; but there are potential problems. These lie in the "strings" or conditions under which donations are made. In all cases, it is preferable that only unconditional gifts be accepted. However, in those instances where an item or collection is of extreme significance and the potential donor

is unwilling to make the gift unconditional, the museum may wish to waive this policy. When this is done, a formal agreement should be made in writing, signed by both donor and institution, and copies made for both parites.

In all instances, it is necessary to formalize donations through a legal transfer of ownership. This can be accomplished through a simple Contract of Gift form, made in two copies for both donor and institution (Figure B-1).

Loans

Loans to museums are usually of two types: from private individuals, and from other museums and institutions. While loans may provide a relatively simple way to acquire collections for exhibit purposes, problems can arise when the lender desires to have items returned at times inconvenient to the museum. Conflict can also develop over alleged damages incurred by objects while on loan to the museum. These problems can be alleviated through the use of loan agreements detailing the length of loan, conditions under which objects will be exhibited, liabilities for damages or loss, and so forth. A sample loan form is illustrated (Figure B-2), although this form, as well as all other legal forms, should be tailored to the individual museum in consultation with their attorney.

Deaccession Policy

Collection policies should always include some mechanism for eliminating objects that become surplus or damaged beyond repair. Deaccessioning should only be done after thorough review by a collection committee -- and only in full consideration of the ramifications in terms of impact on the collection and on public relations.

Museum specialist Eugene F. Kramer suggests the following criteria for determining the deaccessioning of objects or collections:

FORT MISSOULA HISTORICAL MUSEUM
BLDG. 322, FORT MISSOULA
MISSOULA, MONTANA
59801

CONTRACT OF GIFT

I hereby give and donate without limiting conditions to Missoula County for exclusive use in and by the Fort Missoula Historical Museum the following articles to be the absolute property of the Fort Missoula Historical Museum. I warrant that I am the owner of the said articles and have the right to make this donation.

The donor understands that items which become surplus to the museum collections may be traded to another institution, or returned to donor if said donor can be located. Cross out choice not desired and initial: returned to donor or traded to another institution. The donor states that he has read and understands this agreement.

Received by (print)_____
Title_____
Date_____
Signature_____

Received from (print)_____
Title_____
Address_____
Phone_____
Signature_____

Figure B-1: Contract of Gift

A G R E E M E N T

This Agreement made this _____ day of _____ betwee
Fort Missoula Historical Museum, an independent agency and _____
_____,
WITNESSETH:

In consideration of the covenants, promises and agreements hereinafter recited, the parties covenant and agree as follows:

1. That the following described materials shall be on temporary loan to the _____
_____

2. That the following described items shall be returned in prese condition to _____ on or about _____.

3. That the _____ agrees to exer all reasonable care in the preservation of these same items.

4. That _____ agrees to maintain insurance coverage for the items listed in the amount of the value specified in the description.

5. That _____ agrees to abide by the following special conditions:

a.

b.

c.

6. Items covered by this Agreement:

Catalogue No.	Quantity	Value	Description

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Fort Missoula Historical Museum and _____ have caused this Agreement to be executed this _____ day of _____.

Fort Missoula Historical Museum
Building 322 Fort Missoula
Missoula, Montana 59801

_____
Director

_____

_____

_____

Figure B-2: Loan Agreement

1. Items lying outside the defined scope or extent of the collection;
2. Items inappropriate for research, exhibit, or loan;
3. Items damaged beyond economical repair;
4. Items potentially more useful in another colleciton; and
5. Items duplicated many times in the collection.[3]

Records Management

> Each object (in a collection) is an integral part of a cultural or scientific composite. That context also includes a body of information about the object which establishes its proper place and importance and without which the value of the object is diminished. The maintenance of this information in an orderly and retrievable form is critical to the collection and is a central obligation to those charged with collection management.[4]

While many historical and artistic objects bear intrinsic values and communicative abilities that relate emotion and ideals without the aid of interpretation, the vast majority of objects enjoy enhanced meaning and value when they are considered in the context of other information. This information might include when, where, how, why, and by whom an object was made or used. It might include how a specific object relates to other similar objects. It might even detail how the use and value of the object has changed through time. This information is recorded and preserved in a series of standard museum records maintained in some form by all museums and historical agencies.

Accession Records

After the Contract of Gift is negotiated, museum donations are worked into the museum records system in a process called accessioning. The first step is to assign each object a number which identifies the item for all subsequent procedures. A variety of numbering systems are used throughout the profession, but the most common method employs

a three-part number detailing the year of acquisition, the order of the acquisition within that year, and (when applicable) the order of the object within the acquisition. Such a number might read: 81.17.8. This indicates that the object is part of an acquisition received in 1981, that it is the seventeenth acquisition of 1981, and that it is the eighth object within the total acquisition. When two or more objects related to one another in an inseparable manner (such as a pair of shoes, a cup and saucer, or the trousers and tunic of a military uniform), they are given the same number with a letter designation at the end: 81.17.8a and 81.17.8b.

The accession number should be affixed to the object in a manner permanent, accessible, and inconspicuous. (There are many methods of number application and placement favored by different museums; for sources of this information, consult the bibliography).

After assigning the acquisition and accession number, it should be recorded in an Accession Book. The name and address of each donor along with a brief description of each object within the accession also should be included (Figure B-3). The Accession Book thus becomes a cumulative inventory of the museum collection.

In addition to the Accession Book, it is useful to maintain an Accession File. Within this file should be an accession record or detailed list of the entire donation (Figure B-4), the Contract of Gift or Record of Purchase for the accession, all correspondence relating to the accession, and any other relevant documentation.

Collections acquired prior to the implementation of a system such as this can be variously incorporated. If the date and donor of earlier donations is known, simply work out a sequence for that year. If this information is not known, a double letter designation (such as OD for Original Donation) can be used in lieu of the year identification regularly employed.

ACCESSION SHEET

FORT MISSOULA HISTORICAL MUSEUM
BUILDING 322, FORT MISSOULA
MISSOULA, MONTANA
59801

)ONOR: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ACCEPTED BY: _____

_____

ACCESSION NO.	ITEM NAME AND DESCRIPTION

Figure B-3: Accession Sheet

Fort Missoula Historical Muse

Catalog Class:

Acc. No.: **Object:** **Location:**

Object Dates:

Dimensions:

Material: **Inches**

H

Condition & Alterations: **L**

W

D

Dia.

Description:

(SIDE A)

Date Rec'd: **How Acquired:**

Maker: **Maker's Dates:** **Location:**

User: **User's Dates:** **Location:**

Special Marks:

Remarks:

References:

Figure B-4: Acceession File Card

(SIDE B)

Collection Catalog

Museums create collection catalogs in order to have easy access to information about their collections. Catalogs usually consist of card files with information about each object in the collection record on a separate card or cards. An effective catalog system should quickly provide the user with data about each object, including accession number, dimensions, materials, age, maker, and user. Many catalogs also include a photograph of the object.

The catalog can be arranged in a variety of ways depending on the specific needs of the museum for which it is created. It can be arranged in a simple numerical order, but more often, some sort of subject classification is used.

Again, classification systems vary from museum to museum depending on the particular needs of each institution. The particular system employed is not as important as is consistence within the chosen system. Consistency is maintained through strict adherence to an "authorities list" codifying all possible subject headings for a given museum.

In an effort to encourage greater consistency in collection cataloging, the American Association for State and Local History, in 1978, published Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging: A System for Identifying Man Made Objects. The system detailed in this book was designed to be compatible with computer-based systems and is now used in thousands of museums throughout the country. It is highly recommended that the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks use the book as a model for designing the Fort Owen collection catalog.

As a prelude to completing catalog cards for each object, many museums employ curatorial or object worksheets (Figure B-5). Ideally, an object worksheet should contain all of the information needed to complete a catalog card. Once the catalog card is completed, the object worksheet is filed in the accession file.

FORT MISSOULA HISTORICAL MUSEUM
OBJECT WORKSHEET

ACC. #: OBJECT: LOCATION:

DATE REC'D: HOW ACQUIRED:

OBJECT DATES: DIMENSIONS:

	Inches	Cm
H		
L		
W		
D		
Dia.		

MATERIAL:

CATALOGUE CLASS:

MAKER: MAKER'S DATES: LOCATION:

USER: USER'S DATES: LOCATION:

DESCRIPTION:

SPECIAL MARKS:

CONDITION & ALTERATIONS:

REMARKS:

CHECK LIST	
# Assigned	___
Obj #'d	___
Measured	___
Donor Card	___
Ltr of Thanks	___
Cat. Card	___

Figure B-5: Object Worksheet

REFERENCES:

Other Records

Many other types of records may be maintained by a museum in addition to those detailed above. For the Fort Owen collection, two particular card files may be useful: a Donor File and an Association File.

A Donor File is an alphabetical listing of all donors to the collection (Figure B-6). Along with the name, address, and telephone number of the donor, each card should contain the accession number, date, and a brief description of each item donated.

Association Files list all objects in a collection associated with a particular person, group of persons, or an event. If the Fort Owen collection included a number of objects owned or used by John Owen for example, it might be useful to group together the accession numbers, descriptions, and locations of these objects and file them under his name. Such files are most useful for museums that have collections closely identified with particular people or events.

(Note: All permanent museum records should be printed on acid-free paper and stored in an acid-free environment. All records should be periodically microfilmed and stored in fire-proof files or vaults.)

Collection Care and Maintenance

> An ethical duty of museums is to transfer to our successors, when possible in enhanced form, the material record of human culture and the natural world.... Procedures must be established for the periodic evaluation of the condition of the collection and for their general and special maintenance.[5]

It is relatively easy to raise public enthusiasm and funds to build a new museum or acquire prestigious collections, but it is a difficult and an onerous task to develop and fund a program for collection storage and maintenance. Yet historical objects are unique documents upon which is based much of our knowledge of the past. If we allow these documents to deteriorate, our understanding of the past

DONOR:

ADDRESS:

ACCESSION NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION

Figure B-6: Donor Catalog Card

also will deteriorate.

Dirt, rapid changes in temperature, humidity, water, ultra-violet light rays, and human carelessness are the primary destroyers of historical objects. The manner in which these factors are controlled differ for objects on exhibit.

Storage

Ideally, a museum area should be large enough to house adequately the entire collection and have easily controlled access. It should be segregated from other areas in the museum with daily activities such as incoming artifacts, custodial and building supplies, and work-shops. A relative humidity of 50 percent and a temperature of 60 degrees F. should be maintained. If windows are present, they should be kept shuttered or outfitted with ultra-violet ray filters. Lighting should be incandescent, or flourescent with ultra-violet ray filters. These conditions should be specified when designing a new facility, and achieved as much as possible when adapting an existing structure.

Within the storage area, metal shelving should be installed for the storage of small objects; racks for the storage of rolled textiles; metal map cabinets for flat storage of large paper documents; and vertical bins or sliding fence units for painting storage. There are many inexpensive ways to construct adequate storage units "in-house" (see bibliography for sources of information).

In designing storage facilities for Fort Owen consider the following suggestions for each type of artifact material:

Paper. Store large items (such as maps) flat; smaller items can be stored in vertical file folders. Maintain an acid-free environment and keep careful check on humidity. Paper objects are particularly susceptible to mildew damage.

Wood. Protect wood from dust with fabric covers (old bed sheets are inexpensive and effective). Rapid changes in temperature and humidity should be avoided. Inspect periodically for insect damage and store away

from heat vents and exterior doors.

Textiles. Store costume items flat or on padded hangers in a dust-free environment. Store large, flat textiles (such as coverlets, quilts, and rugs) rolled on tubes such as those used by carpet manufacturers. Cover rolled textiles with fabric dust-covers and hang them on a rack in a dust-free and moth-free environment. If textiles are stored folded in boxes, be sure that they are removed from the boxes and refolded every six months to prevent deterioration along crease lines.

Ceramics and Glass. The greatest threat to these items is breakage. Store on shelves and make access easy. Do not stack them.

Paintings. These are best stored hanging or in vertical, well-padded bins. Paintings should be protected from dust, punctures, and rapid temperature and humidity changes.

Metal. Store in a dry environment. Smaller items should be stored on shelves. Large items, such as stoves, should be stored on pallets in an area large enough for access and maneuvering.

Leather. Maintain a dust-free environment with consistent humidity. Extremely dry environments are destructive.

Exhibits

While it is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a controlled environment in historic structures such as those found at Fort Owen, there are many things that can be done to mitigate the environment's destructive effects. The following controls should be observed in those structures containing historic objects.

Sunlight (Ultra-Violet Ray) Control. On all windows, use either ultra-violet ray filter plexiglas; liquid ultra-violet filter chemicals; or period shades, shutters, or curtains.

Water Damage Prevention. Maintain structures, particularly roofs, windows, and doors. Adopt routine storm emergency procedures (i.e., an

emergency plan to use in the event structures are damaged during storms or floods). Use cleaning materials carefully.

Dust. Clean all structures and objects thoroughly but carefully on a routine basis. Fit doors and windows tightly to prevent dust and dirt accumulation. Place mats or rugs at all entrances to cut down on the tracking of dirt through historic structures or in the area of historical collections.

Temperature and Humidity. Prevent rapid changes in temperature and humidity caused by sporadic heating of buildings during cold months. Do not use wood stoves as a primary means of heat. Carefully regulate other heating devices. Chart seasonal changes in temperature and use this information to plan an environmental control program.

Human Accident. Limit access to historic objects with barriers compatible with the historical environment. Use well-ventilated plexiglas cases for rare or fragile objects. Train staff in historic object handling and care.

FOOTNOTES

[1] "Museum Ethics,"Museum News (March-April, 1978).

[2] Edward P. Alexander, Museums in Motion (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979, p. 122.

[3] Eugene F. Kramer, "Collecting Historical Artifacts: An Aid for Small Museums," History News Technical Leaflet #6 (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1969).

[4] "Museum Ethics," Museum News.

[5] Ibid.

(From the Preliminary Report of the Bannack State Park Master Plan, Prepared by Historical Research Associates, Missoula, Montana, August, 1981)

APPENDIX C

ITEMS BOUGHT AND SOLD AT FORT OWEN
(Source: George F. Weisel- Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier)

Item	Quantity	Year	Price
Adobes	each	1854-57	$ .01
"	"	1860	.01½
Ammunition:			
balls		1851-69	1.00
gun flint		1855	1.00
" "		1857	.50
lead	1 lb.	1854	.50
percussion caps		1852	1.00
" "		1855	2.00
" "	each	1859	.01
powder and ball	100	1858	5.00
powder, gun	1 lb.	1850	2.00
" "	"	1853	.25?
" "	"	1854	2.00
" "	"	1855	3.00
rounds	100	1859	5.00
shot	1 lb.	1857	1.00
Apishamore (saddle blankets)	each	1856	1.00
"	"	1858	1.50
Awl	each?	1852	.10
"	gross	1858	2.50
Axe, Collins	each	1856	5.00
" "	"	1858	2.50
Beads:			
garnishing	½ lb.	1850	3.00
"	1 bunch	1855	1.00 to 3.00

garnishing	1 lb.	1856	$ 3.50
scarlet		1852-53	2.00
white		1853	2.00
"	1 lb.	1857	3.00
Bells:			
hawk		1851	.75
"	1 doz.	1852	.22
"	each	1854	.75
Blankets:			
blue	each	1850	10.00
"	"	1851	12.00
green	"	1859	10.00
plaid	"	1851	12.00
red	"	1851	15.00
Salem	"	1859	6.00
white	"	1851	12.00
1½ point	"	1851	6.00
2½ point	"	1856	8.00
" "	"	1857	8.00
3 point	"	1855	12.00
" "	"	1856	10.00 to 15.00
" "	"	1857	7.00
Brandy	1 pt.	1850	2.00
Buttons:			
fancy agate	1 doz.	1857	.25
horn	"	1858	.50
----	3 doz.	1852	.50
Candles	1 lb.	1860	1.00
Candle wick	1 ball	1857-58	.25 to 1.00
Cards, playing	1 deck	1850	1.00
" "	"	1851	3.00

Castorum (beaver gland)	1 lb.	1858	1.50 to 2.00
Chalk line		1854	.50
Cloth:			
apron check	1 yd.	1856	.25
blue twill cotton	"	1857	.37
blue	"	1858	5.00
broad cotton	"	1855	.50
" "	"	1856	.25
" "	"	1857	.50
calico	"	1851	.75 to 1.00
"	"	1856	.25
"	"	1858	.30
cotton	"	1851	.75
"	"	1855	.12
cotton plaid	"	1852	3.50
cotton stripe	"	1856	1.00
cotton check	"	1857	.25
domestic	"	1857	.20
drilling	"	1850	.50
flannel	"	1857	.75
flannel, red	"	1856	.62
" "	"	1857	2.00
gingham	"	1858	1.00
green	"	1851	6.00
"	"	1855	5.00
"	"	1857	3.00
hickory	"	1858	.75
linsey	"	1855	1.50
linsey, heavy plaid	"	1856	.75
linsey	"	1857	2.00
Louisiana plaid	"	1858	.25
muslin, heavy striped	"	1857	.25
satinet	"	1860	3.50

scarlet	"	1855	3.50
"	"	1857	6.00
Scotch	"	1857	6.00
streulle, green	"	1855	1.50
ticking	"	1857	.25
union stripe	"	1857	1.00
Clothing:			
cap, cloth	each	1850	3.50
" "	"	1854	1.00
coat, satinet	"	1853	8.00
" "	"	1853	12.00
" "	"	1858	20.00
cravat, black silk	"	1855	1.75
gartering	set	1851	1.00
gloves	1 pair	1850	2.00
"	"	1851	1.00
hat, felt	each	1858	5.00
hat, fur	each	1857	2.75
", Henry	"	1856	3.00
", Scotch bonnet	"	1856	3.00
", wool	"	1856	3.00
", "	"	1857	5.00
hose, childrens	1 pair	1857	.50
", woolen	"	1855	.75
jacket, soldiers	each	1855	2.50
leggings	"	1851	4.00
"	"	1852	3.00
"	"	1860	2.00
mittens	1 pair	1859	3.00
mocassins	"	1852	.75 to 1.00
overcoat, dragoon	each	1858	10.00
" , -----	"	1859	12.00

pants, buckskin	1 pair	1855	6.00
" , satinet	"	1858	6.00
" , -------	"	1851-60	6.00 to 10.00
shawl, cotton	each	1853	3.00
" , plaid	"	1857	10.00
" , -----	"	1851	5.00
shirt, blue flannel	"	1853	6.00
" , calico	"	1857	2.00
" , cotton	"	1857	3.00
" , flannel	"	1855	5.00
" , grey flannel	"	1858	5.00
shirt, hickory	"	1850	1.00
" "	"	1852	3.00
" , Hudson's Bay trade	"	1855	.85
" , rowing?	"	1855	1.00
" , wool	"	1854	1.50
" , "	"	1860	5.00
shoes, childs	1 pair	1859	2.00
" , government	"	1856	1.50
socks, wool	1 pair	1856	1.00
" , ----	"	1851	1.50
" , ----	"	1860	1.00
underwear, cotton drawers	each	1850	3.50
", cotton drawers	"	1852	1.50
", " "	"	1855	1.00
", " "	"	1858	2.00
", flannel	"	1854	5.00
", flannel shirt	"	1855	2.25
", wool drawers	"	1856	4.00
", wool undershirt	"	1856	4.00
Coffin	each	1859	10.00

Combs:			
fine	each	1852	1.00
riding	"	1858	.50
Compass	"	1852	.50
Cord, hair (rope?)	"	1851	1.50
" "	"	1853	2.00
" "	"	1854	1.00
Cutlery:			
spoons	each	1856	.25
knife and fork	1 pair	1855	1.00
Dishes:			
bread pan	each	1856	1.50
tin cup	"	1855	.25
" "	"	1856	.12
tin plate	"	1855	.25
" "	"	1856	1.00
Ear rings	pair	1854	1.50
File	each	1851	1.00
"	"	1860	2.00
Fish hooks	each?	1850	.10
" "	"	1851	.50
" "	"	1856	.01
Flag, cotton	each	1852	1.00
" "	"	1853	.50
Food:			
butter	1 lb.	1859	.50
candy	----	1850	1.50 to 3.00
coffee	1 lb.	1850-60	1.00
flour	"	1854	.15
"	"	1856	.20
"	"	1858	.10

grain (see Grain)			
grease (see Grease)			
meat, beef	1 lb.	1859	.20
" "	"	1860	.15
" , baked	1 bale	1851	5.00
meat, baled	1 bale	1852	5.00
" , "	"	1856	7.50
" , dried	1 lb.	1855	.20
onions	1 bu.	1859	8.00
peas	"	1859	5.00
pepper	1 lb.	1854	.50
potatoes	1 bu.?	1851	2.00
"	"	1854	3.00
raisins	1 lb.	1856	1.00
rice	-----	1857	1.00
saleratus (baking soda)	1 lb.	1854	.50
"	"	1858	1.00
salt	"	1854	.50
"	"	1857	.10
sugar, brown	"	1857	1.00
" , -----	"	1851	1.00
" , -----	"	1853	.75
tea	"	1851	3.00
"	"	1857	4.00
Furs (see Skins)			
Grain:			
oats	1 bu.	1854	2.00
"	"	1859	3.00
rye seed	"	1858	3.00
wheat	"	1853	2.00
"	"	1858	5.00
"	"	1859	4.10
" , fall	"	1857	3.00

Grain cradle	each	1858	5.00
Grease	1 lb.	1854	.10
Guns:			
Hawkins (at Salt Lake)	each	1858	50.00
government	each	1854	15.00
Hair bob, brass	pair?	1858	1.00
Handkerchiefs:			
silk	each	1851	2.50
cotton	"	1856	1.00
------	"	1850-60	.25 to 2.00
Harness	1 set	1860	12.50
Hay	1 ton	1859	3.00
Helves, hickory ax	each	1855	1.50
" " "	"	1858	2.00
Iron:			
branding	each	1859	3.00
smothing	"	1859	1.50
Knives:			
butcher	each	1851	1.50
pocket	"	1851	2.00
"	"	1859	3.00
scalping	"	1856	1.00
Livestock:			
bull, yearling	each	1850	15.00
" , "	"	1860	25.00
calf	"	1859	12.00
cattle	1 yoke	1850	40.00
cows	each	1850	20.00
"	"	1869	28.00 to 35.00
horse, American	"	1858	158.00
" , Indian	"	1859	36.00
" "	"	1860	34.00
" , -----	"	1850-59	23.00 to 150.00

mules	each	1850	100.00
"	"	1856	150.00
"	"	1858	80.00 to 150.00
"	"	1860	120.00
oxen	"	1851	56.00
"	"	1856	120.00
"	"	1858	100.00
steer, -----	each	1853	25.00
" , 2 yrs.	"	1858	30.00
" , yearling	"	1859	28.75
" , work	"	1859	50.00
Lock	each	1859	5.00
Lodge, skin	each	1851	30.00
Looking glass	each	1850	.50
Lumber	1,000 ft.	1856	25.00
"	"	1859	15.00
Matches	1 box	1858	.50
Nails	1 lb.	1852	.50
"	"	1853	.75
Needles	1 pkg.	1854	.50
Oxen shoes	1 pair	1851	1.00
Paint, vermillion	1 paper	1851	1.00
" "	"	1858	.50
Parfleche (rawhide bag)	each	1850	2.50
"	"	1856	1.00
Pins	1 paper	1856	.10 to .50
Pipe, smoking	each	1851	.20
" "	"	1853	3.00
Porcupine quills	----	1852	1.00
Powder horn	each	1854	2.00
Rings:			
finger	each?	1857	1.00
trade	"	1855	.15

Rope			
lasso	each	1856	3.00
sash	"	1856	1.00
Rot gut (whiskey)	----	1857	6.00
Sacks:			
grain	each	1854	1.00
flour	"	1858	2.00
Saddles:			
Grimsley	each	1856	20.00
Oregon	"	1858	40.00
pack	"	1859	5.00 to 8.00
riding	"	1860	35.00
Saddle trees:			
Oregon	each	1854	10.00
-------	"	1853-54	4.00 to 5.00
Scissors	each	1856	3.00
Skins:			
antelope	each	1851	1.50
"	"	1855	2.00
"	"	1857	1.00
bear, -----	"	1857	2.50 to 3.00
" , grizzly	"	1858	3.00
" , black	"	1858	4.00
beaver	1 lb.	1857	2.00
"	"	1857	1.50
"	"	1858	2.00
buckskin	each	1852	2.00 to 3.00
"	"	1859	5.00
buffalo	"	1851	4.00
"	"	1852	5.00
deer, dressed	"	1854	3.50
elk	"	1850	3.00

elk	each	1851	4.00
"	"	1852	3.50
"	"	1857	5.00
fisher	"	1857	.75
lodge	"	1857	2.00
martin	"	1857	.75
"	"	1860	3.00
otter	"	1852	2.00
"	"	1857	3.00 to 5.00
"	"	1858	3.00
sheep for pants	"	1852	2.50 to 3.00
Soap:			
Windsor	1 bar	1854	.75
-------	"	1850	.50
-------	"	1860	1.00
Steel, fire	----	1852	.37 to .50
Stove with pipe	each	1853	20.00
Tacks	1 doz.	1854	.12
Thread:			
linen	1 hank	1857	.50
patent	"	1858	.25
------	"	1856	.50
------	"	1857	.05
Throwing cord (lariat)	each	1855	5.00
" "	"	1856	3.00
Tobacco:			
chewing plug	1 lb.	1851-60	1.50
smoking	"	1851-60	1.00
Towel, crash	each	1858	1.00
Utensils:			
kettle, brass	each	1857	5.00
" , japaned	"	1856	5.00 to 6.00

kettle, tin	each	1855	1.75
" , ----	"	1851	3.00
skillet	"	1856	4.00
" , with lid	"	1857	10.00
Wagons:			
mule	each	1859	75.00
----	"	1850	50.00
Wagon tires	each	1858	2.50
Wire:			
brass	1 ft.	1856	.50
copper	1 ball	1857	.10

APPENDIX D

COLLEAGUES OF JOHN OWEN

Frank B. Owen

There is little doubt that Frank B. Owen accompanied his brother John Owen to the Bitterroot Valley on the 1850 trading expedition. Frank Owen's name is recorded in both the Ledger and on the Bill of Sale for the St. Mary's Mission properties. He was active in the development of the Fort, its farms and mills, frequently assuming responsibility in his brother's absence. Frank Owen left the region in 1858, returned in 1860, and thenceforth traveled throughout the Northwest as a trader. In late 1866, Frank Owen returned to the Bitterroot and, in 1867, opened a store in Stevensville, Montana.

Caleb Irvine

Born in 1825, Caleb Irvine spent his early years on a farm in Tennessee. In 1846, he enlisted in a regiment of mounted riflemen and served in the Mexican War. At the close of the war, he was promoted to lieutenant and assigned a unit under Colonel William Loring. Loring commanded a regiment which left Fort Leavenworth in 1849 for Oregon. John Owen was employed as sutler on this same expedition. After wintering at Cantonment Loring outside Fort Hall, Irvine was transferred to The Dalles and served as quartermaster.

In September, 1851, Owen stopped at The Dalles on his return journey from Walla Walla with supplies for his recently acquired post. He evidently convinced Irvine to accompany him to Fort Owen in the Bitterroot Valley. Irvine resigned from the army and returned to the Fort with John Owen. He remained at Fort Owen until 1863, spending summers from 1852-1856 along the Oregon Trail where he traded dressed skins and horses to the emigrants for their broken down stock.

During the winter of 1859-1860, Irvine worked on the construction of the Mullan Road. In 1863, he joined the gold stampede to Alder Gulch. Before his death in 1891, Irvine was elected to the First Legislative Council of Montana and served continuously as Probate Judge or Justice of the Peace in Deer Lodge, Butte and Anaconda.

Henri M. Chase

Henri Chase and his wife arrived at Fort Owen in August, 1856, after the 1855-1856 Nez Perce controversies forced them to leave Idaho. Chase remained at Fort Owen for some years becoming a highly trusted employee of John Owen. He, too, managed the establishment in Owen's absence. In 1859, Owen appointed Chase local agent to the Upper Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai tribes, a position paying $1,000.00 a year.

Thomas W. Harris

Harris was born in Woodford County, Kentucky, August 20, 1827. In 1851, he travelled to Fort Hall and there entered the employ of John Owen.

While at Fort Owen, Harris aided in the construction of buildings, helped operate the grist mill, accompanied Owen on a number of excursions, and often managed the trading post while Owen was away. Until 1856, Harris also bartered livestock along the Oregon Trail. In 1862, Owen hired Harris as an Indian Department farmer, paying him $1,000.00 per year. The following spring, Harris assumed charge of the Fort while Owen traveled to Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. Displeased with this responsibility, Harris spent a good deal of time at his own farm on Three Mile Creek. After his return, Owen began hearing derogatory rumors, supposedly initiated by Harris. Any friendship which had previously existed, soon deteriorated. In 1866, Owen sued Harris for breach of contract.

APPENDIX E

OWEN'S CONTRACT FOR THE ERECTION OF THE FIRST COMMERCIAL GRIST MILL OF THE REGION

1863

"Mill Contract"

Article of Agreement made & Entered into this 17" day of Jany 1863 between Jno Owen of Fort Owen Washington Territory of the one part & Geo W Windes of the Bitter Root Valley & Territory aforeaide of the other part

First The Said G.W. Windes for the Consideration hereinafter mentioned, doth Covenant, promise, & agree, to erect in the most workman like & Substantial manner a Grist Mill of the following dimensions

Viz! Mill frame 22 by 32 feet. Three Stories high, each Story built in Seperate Sections Enclosed with Siding & covered with 16in Shingles

2d To build a 14 foot overshot wheel & Counter wheels sufficient to drive two run of three foot Burrs.

3rd To build a Suction fan & Smut Machine

4th To build a bolting chest with Bolt Sufficient for two run of Burrs with Elevators & Conductors necessiary to carry the Wheat & flour to & from the Bolt & Burrs.

5th To build granaries Sufficient for holding the Wheat & Bran

6th To build all the flume necessiary for conducting what water may be required to drive the aforesaid machinery.

In consideration whereof the said Jno Owen does agree to pay the Said G W Windes the Sum of Fifteen Hundred Dollars and to furnish all the materials on the ground Such as Timbers Irons, Nails, Shingles,

Bolting Cloth &c, that may be required for the aforesaid mill, Save & Except the Shafts. Counter Shafts Coggs & trundle head timbers, which the aforesaid G.W. Windes, agrees to get from the Stump in person.

The aforesaid G W Winds, binds himself to be as expeditious in carrying on the work as possible loosing no unnesessiary time, with a view to having the Mill ready to run by the first day of September Next providing that the aforesaid Jno Owen complies with his part of the agreement in furnishing the Material from time to time as it may be Wanted. The aforesaid Jno Owen further agrees to board the aforesaid G W Windes during the time he is at work on the Mill

In testimony whereof we have hereunto Set our hands and Seals the day & year first above written

Witness — Jno Owen

(signed)

C.E. Irvine — G W Windes

Thos W Harris

APPENDIX F

A LIST OF BOOKS FROM THE FORT OWEN LIBRARY

Addison, Joseph. The Spectator. Cincinnatti: H.S. and J. Applegate and Company, 1851.

Alison's History of Europe. New York, 1846.

Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1868. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868.

Byron's Complete Works.

Chamber's Information for the People, a Popular Encyclopedia. Philadelphia: Jas. L. Gihon, 1858.

Darwin, Charles. Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited During the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle Round the World. London: John Murrray, 1845.

Dicken's Complete Works. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson.

Hale,Sarah Josepha. A Complete Dictionary of Poetical Quotations. Philadelphia: J.B.Lippincott and Company, 1867.

Hildreth, Richard. History of the United States. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854.

Hoes and Way, Rev. Messrs. Anecdotical Olio. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858.

Washington Irvings Complete Works. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1858.

The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, edited by H.A. Washington. Washington, D.C.: Thorne and Company, 1854

Letter of the Secretary of War, Transmitting Report of the Organization of the Army of the Potomac, and of its Campaigns in Virginia and Maryland, under the Command of Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan from July 26, 1861 to November 7, 1862. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864.

Lingard, John. A History of England from the First Invasion by the Romans. Philadelphia: Eugene Cummiskey, printer J. Harding, 1827.

Locke's Essay Concerning the Human Understanding. New York, 1824.

Marryatt's Works. New York: Derby and Jackson.

Milton's Poetical Works.

Olmsted's School Philosophy, revised edition by Denison Olmsted. New Haven: S.Babcock, 1855.

Petrarch's Sonnets, and Odes.

Plutarch's Lives, edited by John and William Langhorne. New York: Derby and Jackson, 1858.

Rollin's Ancient History. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854.

Sir Walter Scott. Waverly Novels. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1857.

The American Alamanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1853. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853.